

PLUCK AND LUCK

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

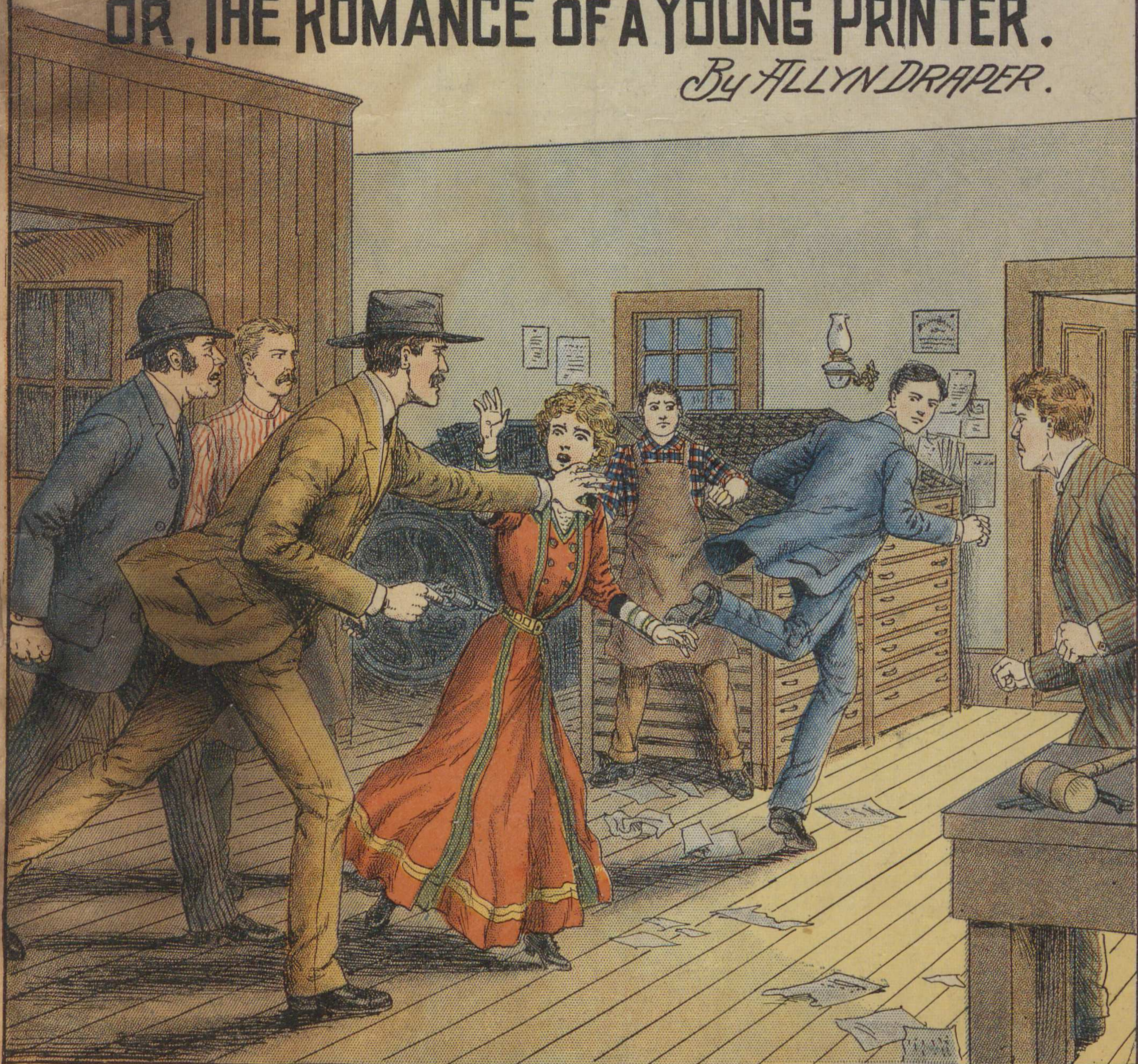
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NEW YORK, MARCH 24, 1909.

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BEN BREVIER; OR, THE ROMANCE OF A YOUNG PRINTER. *By ALLYN DRAPER.*



He turned and dashed for the back door, uttering a yell of defiance as he ran out. "Stand aside, young lady!" yelled the officer, as Jennie attempted to stop the man.

"I'll shoot the boy on sight!"

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BEN BREVIER

OR,

The Romance of A Young Printer

By Allyn Draper

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY FROM NOWHERE.

"We want a new devil, Mr. Darkmore. Please get me one right off."

"Why, Disher, what's become of the old one? Terry ain't run off, has he?"

"No—Terry is all right, and I'm going to promote him—going to put him at the case altogether; but Joe Drake says he's twenty-one, and he wants full jour's pay."

"Full jour's pay!" exclaimed the editor, as he stared up from his desk at the foreman with a look of horror. "Why, the fellow can't be more than nineteen. Put him on by the piece as a two-thirder."

"I offered him that, and he refused it," returned the foreman. "He swears he's twenty-one, and that he can set up type better than the cripples, and he wants full pay."

"Let him go to thunder, then," growled the savage editor. "He wants to burst up the establishment—blame him!"

"That's what I told him, sir," returned the foreman, with a sly smile; "and he said you and your confounded old Beagle may burst up and be hanged."

"Did the scoundrel dare say that, Disher?" cried the furious editor, as he bounded up from the desk and seized the paste-pot. "Where is he, till I brain him?"

"Oh, he's cleared out of town two hours ago, sir. He said 'twas no use in waiting to see you, as he knew you were too much of an old skinflint to——"

"Did he call me a skinflint, Disher?" yelled the infuriated editor. "Why didn't you lick the life out of him, confound you?"

"Cause he weighs forty pounds more than I do, Mr. Darkmore," returned the foreman, in dry tones, "and I ain't the fighting man of the establishment. But what about getting a new devil, or will I hire a jour?"

"Hire thunder! Do you want to have the sheriff in on me? Say, Disher, can't you manage to get along with the force you have, by working the boys and yourself a little more?"

"Can't be done, Mr. Darkmore," replied the candid foreman. "We're rushed to death now, and the election is coming on. If you are not satisfied with what I do, get somebody else to take my place. I ain't going to kill myself——"

"Now, Disher, don't be getting mad," cried the editor, as he fell hopelessly back in his chair. "Here I am, writing a splendid editorial on the 'Rights of Labor,' and you've knocked all my grand ideas out of my head."

"But I must have a devil or a jour, sir," persisted the foreman.

"Just wait till I finish this article, and I'll go over to the poorhouse and get you a good devil, Disher."

"You got Terry from the poorhouse," responded the foreman, "and a wild devil he is."

"But he doesn't cost anything but his grub and Bob's old clothes, Disher; and he does the chores around the house as good as a servant girl—isn't that a big saving?"

"I ain't got a word to say against Terry," smiled the good-natured foreman, "and I'm sure he's worth more than he gets. I don't care whether you get him from the poorhouse, or the jail, or the lunatic asylum; but I want a good, smart, lively devil right off, or there'll be a kick."

And the candid foreman turned on his heel to leave the sanctum, when a low, mild voice at the door arrested him, saying: "Please, sir, do you want a boy?"

Fred Disher was somewhat of a wit, and before replying to the intruder, he turned to the miserly editor, and burst out into a fit of laughter, ere he cried:

"Talk of the devil, and here he comes. Mr. Darkmore, look at our friend."

"What's that you say, Disher?" cried the editor, as he wheeled around.

"There's a devil for you!" cried the foreman, as he pointed to a black-faced, ragged lad, who was standing at the door of the sanctum.

"Please, sir, do you want a boy?" again inquired the uncouth intruder, as he stared from the merry foreman to the grim-visaged editor. "I do want to be a printer so bad."

The owner of the pleading voice appeared to be a lad of about seventeen; and even his ragged, misshapen garments could not hide the well-shaped limbs beneath.

His face was covered—or smeared—all over with some black substance; yet the two men could see that he had regular features; that he had light, wavy hair; and the foreman was at once attracted to the mild, blue eyes, and the soft, clear, pleading voice.

"Who in thunder daubed your face all over with ink, and who sent you here?" demanded the gruff editor.

"Please, sir," was the lad's reply, as he fingered his old hat nervously, "I went into the Gazette office to ask if they wanted an apprentice, and they——"

"Blacked your face all over with ink and sent you up here," interrupted the foreman, with a merry laugh.

"Yes, sir," replied the lad. "They said that I was to ask for old Mr. Skinflint, and——"

"I'll skinflint the scoundrels!" roared the insulted editor. "I'll bring an action for libel against them. I'll burst up that miserable sheet before they get out another edition. What else did they say in that one-horse concern, you infernal young idiot?"

"Please, sir, they told me you wanted a boy to learn the printing business, but that you never took an apprentice if he wasn't blind, or lame, or lost a hand, or——"

"I'll make them see streaked lightning, the scoundrels, before long!" roared the angry editor, as he danced around the sanctum. "Disher, kick that young rascal out. Give him thunder. This is a put-up job to insult me. Won't I make Fuller sweat for this base, low trick. Oh, the miserable, mean, contemptible scalawag!"

And the angry editor, groaning with rage, flung himself on his chair and pressed his hands on his burning brow, muttering dire threats the while against his rival, Franklin Fuller, of the Centretown Gazette.

Oh, the merry smile that was on the foreman's face as he turned to the innocent youth and said:

"I must kick you out, young fellow."

"Very well, sir," replied the verdant lad, as he turned his back to the foreman. "They told me old Skinflint would kick me out first and then take me in after. I don't mind kicking much, for I'm used to it; but I do want to be a printer! Please, sir, the imposing stones are out on the sidewalk in a wheelbarrow."

"The imposing stones!" cried the foreman, as he stared at the black-faced youth.

"Yes, sir; they said down at the Gazette office as how old Mr. Skinflint was too mean to buy imposing stones, and they said as how I'd be sure to get a job from him if I brought the loan of two good ones to him."

The foreman rushed to the window, and another roar of laughter burst from him as he saw a wheelbarrow on the sidewalk with two great rough rocks on it.

As the author intends to make everything clear as he proceeds, to those who are not familiar with the mysteries of a printing office he will now state that "imposing stones" are the large flat marble slabs, on which the types are "made up" before being placed on the press; and the youngest apprentice is called "the devil."

"Sold again!" cried Disher, as he winked at the laughing employees of the Gazette, who were taking notes at the opposite corner. "Mr. Darkmore, get out your revolver."

"Dear me, Disher, what's the matter?" inquired the nervous editor, as he made a dash into the composing-room. "Is that wretch Fuller coming in here again, after I bound him over to keep the peace last week?"

Then the hands in the Beagle office, who saw that something was up, rushed out to the front stoop to see the fun.

"Help this nigger boy in with those stones, Benson," cried the foreman, addressing a young fellow who had only one arm. "Bob, you just get your father's revolver, and keep the Gazette fellows back. They're going to mob us."

The young fellow with the one arm cast one look at the rough stones on the wheelbarrow, and another at the disfigured face of the simple lad, ere he cried:

"Lug them in yourself, Mr. Disher, or get Jerry here to do

it. I'm not working by the week, I ain't. Criminy, see the Gazette fellers."

"Is it a fine fight we're going to have?" cried a dark-haired young fellow, with a wild gleam in his black eyes, who had rushed out of the Beagle composing-room. "What's it about?"

The foreman stepped down to the wheelbarrow, picked up a card from off one of the rough rocks, and then held the paste-board up as he read aloud:

"Presented to Old Skinflint by the Hands of the Centretown Gazette, and with them A New Devil from Nowhere."

"A dire insult!" cried the foreman of the Beagle, in a mock tragic voice, as he shook his clenched fist at the employees of the Gazette on the opposite corner.

"Have at them, boys," cried the young fellow with the gleaming black eyes, as he made a dash across the street towards the employees of the rival sheet. "Thunder and lightning, I can lick the best of the crowd—give and take."

A loud shout of derision burst from the Gazette boys as they scampered down the street, just as the scowling editor of the Beagle appeared on the stoop, crying:

"Get back to your work, gentlemen of my establishment, and don't waste time with those miserable wretches. Where's that young fool who caused all this mischief?"

The "young fool who had caused all the mischief" was leaning on the stoop rail, staring at the scene like one bewildered, while all the employees were looking at his blackened face, and smiling and winking at each other as they slipped into work at the command of the Great Mogul—the editor.

"Please, sir," said the blackened simpleton, as he turned to the foreman, "won't you kick me, and have it over. I do want to be a printer so much."

The angry editor, with a muttered oath, was about to administer the penalty, when the foreman, in a friendly way, placed himself before the lad, saying:

"Don't touch the boy, Mr. Darkmore. What is your name, young fellow?"

"Ben, sir," was the quiet reply.

"Got no other?" inquired the foreman.

"That's all I was ever called, sir."

"Where do you come from, Ben?"

"Nowhere, sir."

"Kick him down the stoop!" cried the editor. "He's a fool or a rogue. I tell you, it's a put-up job, Disher. Kick him down."

The foreman didn't see it in that light, as he was taken with the simple-appearing lad, while he continued:

"Not a father or mother, Ben?"

"No, sir; but I've got a letter from my mother—who's dead. Oh, sir, kick me, if you'll give me a chance to be a printer!"

"I'm going to take this boy for a devil, Mr. Darkmore," said the foreman, in resolute tones, "if he knows how to read and write. Can you, Ben?"

"Yes, sir, and I know geography, and I can parse, and——"

"That will do, Ben," said the foreman, "you just come into the office with me. Mr. Darkmore, I'll take this boy for a devil, and there'll be a kick if you interfere."

The boss did not interfere, for the very good reason that he was afraid of Disher's "kicks," and Ben was soon introduced into the composing-room, where the foreman informed the hands that he was to be the new devil.

"Hurrah!" cried the young rogue with the gleaming black eyes, as he kicked his cap up to the ceiling and then caught it on his head. "I'm not the devil any more."

"You keep still, Terry," cried the foreman, "or I'll shy a mallet at you. See to getting this young fellow some soap and a towel until he washes that ink off his face. Nice trick for the Gazette fellows to play."

And all hands—save the editor's son—indulged in loud

bursts of laughter, as the foreman told them of the scene in the sanctum, while Terry swore "that if they had an ounce of pluck in them they'd go down and tear out the Gazette office."

"Please, sir," said the young stranger, in low tones, as he turned to the foreman, "couldn't I leave this black on my face? I—I—want to be disguised. I have enemies, who want to kill me."

The kind-hearted foreman was touched by that plaintive voice, and drawing the disfigured lad aside, he asked:

"Young fellow, what's wrong with you? Where did you come from, and what are you afraid of?"

One look into the foreman's kindly face, and there was a tear in the lad's eye, as he replied:

"I have just escaped from prison, sir. I was accused of murder. But may I be struck dead this moment if I am not as innocent of the crime as you are. Oh, for mercy's sake, don't betray me. My enemies are after me now. I haven't a friend in the wide world. Believe me, sir, I'm not a thief or a murderer."

"I believe you, poor fellow," answered Disher, as he pressed the fugitive's hand. "I'll stand to you as well as I can. Trust to me."

CHAPTER II.

BEN STRIKES HIS FIRST BLOW.

Centretown is a flourishing place in the State of New York, and it boasted of two very lively weekly newspapers, whose editors were eternally at war.

Tom Darkmore, the editor of the Beagle, was a man of fifty, rich and mean as dirt, scurrilous and cowardly; and his son, Bob, was a "chip" of the old man.

It was rumored that the editor of the Beagle, who also practiced law, had obtained his wealth by some dark transactions in days gone by, for certain it was that the profits of the paper were not sufficient to enable him to acquire the extensive mortgages and property he possessed.

This man wrote glowing articles on the rights of labor, and he starved his own employees.

He was eternally preaching of immoral light reading, and he would not allow a story paper in his house; yet his own son was the greatest sneak and the meanest scamp in town.

Darkmore indulged in the grossest personalities about his rival, Franklin Fuller, who was a "square man" in every way, but he had not the manhood to face his rival with fist or weapon, when bodily attacked for his abuse.

So much for the character of the man who will act an important part in this history, and now for the employees in the Beagle office.

Fred Disher, the foreman, was a man, in every sense of the word—a good printer, a just overseer, and an outspoken advocate of truth and justice.

Darkmore was compelled to treat his foreman with respect, as well as to pay him good wages, for the simple reason that Disher would not stand any nonsense, and he was industrious and competent.

Disher had two "jours," and two apprentices, at the time when the forlorn fugitive sought the position of "devil" in the Beagle office.

Both of the "jours" had served in the war, and they each bore honorable marks of their gallantry, as Josh Perkins had lost a leg, while Jack Benson had only his right hand to work with in setting up type.

The oldest apprentice in the office was the editor's son, who was called Black Bob, from the fact that his face was always

smeared with ink, while a dark scowl was ever on his repulsive countenance, and his heart was black indeed.

Terry Mallon was the only name the former devil ever went by, though he could never tell where he got that title, as he did not know his parents.

Terry was a graduate of the poorhouse, and he was one of the wildest scamps, and the most mischievous, ever sent out on the world from any institution—good or bad.

What the lad might have become, if treated properly from childhood, is hard to say, but kickings and cuffings, incessant toil and no play, abuse and slurring, had soured his mind; and he felt that all human beings were his enemies.

And yet Terry was full of mischief, always ready for a fight or a prank, and fearing or respecting no one save Fred Disher, the foreman, while he hated his employer with a savage hate.

But there was one being in the world whom Terry loved, as will appear hereafter.

Such were the employees of the Beagle office where our wanderer had found a resting-place.

As the foreman was speaking to the young fugitive, he drew him to his desk in a secluded corner of the room, and, motioning the blackened lad to a chair beside him, he asked:

"Will you tell me the story of your life? You may trust me to keep your secret."

"I feel that I can, sir," was the earnest reply. "I will tell you."

And the fugitive told his story in simple words, while he kept his honest blue eyes fixed on the foreman.

When the story was ended, the foreman pressed his hand, saying:

"I firmly believe you, Ben. You must remain here, and learn the business. You will have a rough time for awhile; and then you can set out to avenge your wrongs. Can you fight?"

"I—I—never tried much, sir," stammered the lad, as his eyes brightened. "But I don't think I'll be a coward when the time comes to—"

"I was going to say," interrupted the foreman, as he cast an eye at the mischievous Terry, "that it would be well for you if you showed some of the fellows here that you're not a slouch. Lick the first one who attempts to impose on you, and you are all right."

At that moment the foreman was summoned to a political convention by the editor, and ordering Terry to supply the stranger with soap and towel, he hastened away.

And then Terry was up for mischief; he was after the new devil.

"Want soap and towel, eh?" he commenced, as he winked at the others. "'Pears to me 'tis oil or lye will have to take that ink off—or benzine."

"Whatever you like," replied the humble lad.

"What's your name, anyhow, young fellow?" inquired the mischief, as he set about preparing some very strong lye in a bucket.

"Ben," was the reply.

"Jiminy crickets," cried Terry, as he stared at the blackened face, while he stirred the potash in the bucket. "Here's a snoozer what's only got one name, fellers. Say, mustn't we christen him?"

"Certainly—he must have a full name if he wants to work in this office!" cried Black Bob; "baptize him, Terry."

The crippled jours did not say a word, as they were afraid of the mischievous Terry.

"You'll have to clear out of this office unless you get christened," said Terry to Ben. "The boss would never stand it."

Now, our fugitive wanderer was not as simple as he appeared, and he saw at once that Terry was poking fun at him; but he was anxious to conciliate his new associates, even

though they played some harmless tricks on him, little dreaming of the dose in store.

"Well," he said, "I don't mind being christened, if you say it's right. You can give me any other name you like."

"Stand here by this trough, then," cried Terry, "and I'll do the job. I must blindfold you, you know. That's always the way we christen devils in a printing office. Stand around, fellows, and see the ceremony. What name will you take?"

"Any name you like," replied the victim, who had allowed Terry to bind the towel over his eyes in the meantime.

Terry stepped on a low stool, holding the bucket in his hand, as he cried:

"You must pick out a name for yourself, you know. As you are going to be a printer, what do you say to Brevier—Ben Brevier."

"Revier—Revier!" gasped the victim, as he started back. "Did you say Revier?"

"No—no," said Terry. "B-r-e-v-i-e-r, a kind of type we use. You'll soon know all the names of the types. What do you say to Brevier?"

"That will do," replied the victim, with a sigh of relief.

"Ben Brevier it is, then," cried Terry.

And the rascal dashed the bucket of burning lye over his victim's head.

In justice to the crippled jouts, it must be stated that they supposed the bucket contained water only, or they would have interfered to prevent the outrage.

Bob Darkmore knew that Terry was mixing the potash, and a shriek of delight burst from the mean hound, as he saw the victim dancing around the room, uttering cries of pain, as he tore the bandage from his eyes.

"That will take all the ink off his face," cried Terry, as he danced around after his victim. "He—he—he! isn't it a bully baptism? You'll never forget your christening, young feller."

"My eyes—my eyes!" roared the suffering victim, as he pressed his hands thereto. "I am blind! Oh, how could you be so cruel? Water—water, for mercy's sake!"

The crippled jouts were about to drag the poor sufferer back to the pump in the rear, when a young girl of sixteen dashed into the room, crying:

"What is the matter with this boy? Who is he? Terry, this is one of your tricks."

"I—I didn't mean it, Miss Jennie," stammered the cruel wretch, as he sneaked away behind the press. "Water will wash it out."

"Oh, goodness! my eyes!" groaned the victim in the meantime. "Will no one throw water over me? I am burning all over!"

"Come out with me, poor fellow," cried the young girl, as she seized Bob's hand. "You, Benson and Perkins, get out and pump as hard as you can—and you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. You wretch—you monster! don't you ever speak to me again!"

The last sentence was addressed to the cruel Terry, who now sprang forward to assist in washing away the burning fluid.

The poor sufferer was placed under the pump in the yard, and while the cool water was poured down on his head and body, the young girl continued her bitter denunciation, the two crippled jouts protesting their innocence as well as they could.

"Oh, ain't I ashamed of you as a brother, you fiend!" she cried, as she turned her flashing eyes on Bob Darkmore. "I know that you encouraged that other wretch to do this. If I were a man I'd beat the pair of you to death. Can you see now, poor fellow?"

"Yes—yes, thank you," replied Ben, as he withdrew his face from under the pump, and allowed the water to flow down on his tattered clothes. "I'll soon be all right. Oh, I'm so much obliged to you, miss. I guess I wanted that bath."

"You'll want a suit of dry clothes," said the young girl, as she looked at the drenched garments. "Come into the house, and I'll give you this wretch's Sunday rig. There!"

And Jennie turned to her scowling brother as if defying him to offer any opposition to the proposition.

Ben cast one glance at the indignant young girl, and he could see that her eyes were dark and flashing, that her black hair fell in ringlets on her neck, and that she had one of the most expressive and kindly faces he ever beheld.

"Come into the house with me," continued the young girl, as she saw that Ben hesitated. "Who is he, Mr. Benson?"

"The new devil, Miss Jennie."

"Ah, I understand. Oh, you are a nice lot of human beings to abuse a fellow creature in that way. Come in with me, poor boy."

Ben looked at the kind creature for a moment, and his face was now clean and deathly pale, as he replied:

"I thank you, miss, and I will go. But I must give this fellow a licking first; the foreman said I should give it to the first one who imposed on me. Here goes."

And the mild-mannered lad made a dash at Terry, struck him a violent blow on the face, knocking the rascal to the ground.

Jennie uttered a cry of joy and clapped her hands, as she cried:

"Oh, isn't that just splendid. Give this other wretch one like it, if he is my brother."

"What's all this row about?" cried a harsh voice, as the editor and the foreman appeared on the scene. "What's the matter, Jennie?"

CHAPTER III.

THE FIGHT IN THE YARD.

Jennie did not answer on the instant, as she was watching Terry, who had regained his feet, his eyes gleaming with rage, as he glared at the young stranger.

"What is the matter, Benson?" cried the editor, as he stared at Ben's dripping figure.

"Guess they've been washing the new devil, sir," replied the one-handed typo, with a smile.

"I guess those two wretches have been trying to burn his eyes out, by pouring a bucket of lye on his head, father," cried Jennie, as she pointed to Terry and her brother.

"He hit me in the face, and I'm bound to lick him," grumbled Terry.

"I'm going to lick you," said Ben, as he advanced on his tormentor, his blue eyes flashing with indignation.

"Stop that!" roared the editor, as he dashed in between the lads. "What do you mean, you young scoundrels! Don't you know I don't allow fighting in my——"

"You stand aside, please, sir," said the foreman, in firm tones, as he pushed the editor back. "I've been wanting to see Terry get a good licking, and I think he deserves it now for certain. Look at that boy's eyes! Go in and give it to him, Ben."

"That feller lick me!" cried Terry. "Why, I'll eat him up—I'll mash him to pieces—while——"

Before the boaster could utter another word, Ben let fly and struck him in the mouth, knocking two teeth down his throat, and sending him staggering against the pump.

"Oh, isn't that splendid!" again exclaimed Jennie, as she kept her father back.

"Ha, ha, Terry!" cried the foreman, "you've caught a Tartar at last."

"This is disgraceful," roared the editor. "What will that

scoundrel, Fuller, say, when he learns the facts? They must not fight, Jennie."

"Oh, I only wish you'd treat Fuller that way, father," cried Jennie, as she forced the cowardly editor back. "Then he wouldn't be putting mean articles in his paper about you."

"I never wrote a line about you or your lady mother, Miss Jennie, and I never will, though your father has published scurrilous things about my wife and daughters," said a manly voice at the door.

"'Tis Fuller—'tis Fuller!" groaned the editor of the Beagle, as he made a dash behind the two cripples. "Save me, men. He came here to murder me."

"Shame, father!" cried the young daughter.

"I did not come here to assault you, Darkmore," said the rival editor, who was a man of medium stature, with a pleasant face, and merry blue eyes. "I came here to apologize for the insult offered you by my hands in sending the—Thunder, ain't those young fellows pitching into each other!"

And the two young fellows were pitching into each other with savage fury.

When Terry received the blow that sent him reeling against the pump, the young rascal was dazed for a few moments; but it was only for a few moments.

Hearing the exultant cries of the foreman and Jennie, he cast one more reproachful glance at the young girl, and then, with a vengeful yell, he sprang at his foe.

And then it was give and take for some moments, as the vengeful blows were exchanged at close quarters.

"Don't interfere, Mr. Fuller, I beg of you," cried the foreman, as the editor of the Gazette made a movement to part the lads. "This is my new devil, and Terry has been imposing on him cruelly already. Let them fight it out fair, for I do want to see him lick the rascal."

"So do I," cried Jennie.

"He's not able," roared Terry, in savage tones, as he struck out right and left. "I'll make mince-meat out of the loafer in no time."

"I'm going to lick you badly," cried Ben, as he dealt blow for blow. "I'll show you that you mustn't play any more tricks on me."

"This is disgraceful!" groaned the editor of the Beagle, as he glared at his rival. "Disher, you must stop this fight. Fuller will have a full column in his sheet about this."

"Not a line," cried Fuller, as he winked at Disher. "I like to see a quarrel settled in a square, manly way. Ha! Terry is catching it now right lively."

And Terry was catching it right lively, as the young stranger was warming up to the work, dealing his tormentor stinging blows that sent him staggering around the yard, and following him up with such fury as left him no chance of regaining his breath.

"Terry is licked!" cried Jack Benson.

"Knocked out of time!" said Josh Perkins.

"Cry enough, Terry, or he'll kill you," sang out the foreman.

"Nary enough!" roared Terry, as he dashed in at his opponent and clutched him by the throat. "I'll kill him first!"

Ah, Terry, that game would not work with the mild-mannered youth, who now seemed to be possessed with the strength and fury of an enraged bull.

One sudden, violent thrust forward of the young stranger's head, and Terry was sprawling on the ground, gasping for breath.

"Have you enough now?" demanded Ben, in excited tones, as he stood over his tormentor.

"I—I—guess I have," gasped Terry. "You've got the best of me this turn, but——"

"You'll never try it on again, Terry," cried the foreman. "Young fellow, I'm glad you licked him."

"But I've got to lick the other yet," cried Ben, as he glared at Bob Darkmore. "He urged him on to throw the burning stuff on me, and he must get his share of the punishment."

The foreman and the others stared in astonishment at the young fellow.

Ten minutes before, and he was as mild and as humble in his bearing as the meekest petitioner for office could be; and now his blue eyes flashed with anger; every vein in his forehead was swollen with excitement and indignation, and that voice, so quiet and plaintive before, now rang out clear and determined.

"Who else abused you, young fellow?" inquired the editor of the Beagle.

Bob Darkmore—the cowardly hound—was sneaking away, when the young stranger sprang after him, crying:

"This sneaking fellow. He must get his share. The foreman said I must lick all those who imposed on me."

"I didn't do nothing to you," whined Bob.

"You did. You urged on the other fellow; and you're worse than he is. Take that!"

And before anyone could interfere, Ben struck Black Bob a tremendous blow between the eyes, stretching him on the ground.

"Served him right," said Jennie to the interested editor of the Gazette. "'Twas shameful to abuse him as they have done."

"He's killed my son, you scoundrel," yelled the editor of the Beagle, as he stooped down to pick up a brick. "Oh, you murdering wretch, I'll have your worthless life."

"Father—father!" cried Jennie. "Don't dare to hit the boy. He was right. Gracious goodness! he's killed him! Ah, that was cowardly, father! I can never respect you again."

The infuriated coward had dashed the brick at Ben's face with all his force, and the poor wanderer was stretched insensible on the ground, the blood gushing from his mouth and nose.

"Cowardly is no name for it," cried Fuller of the Gazette, as he bent over the insensible lad with Disher. "You may be certain I'll have this outrage in the Gazette, Darkmore."

"The boy is dead!" cried Disher. "You fellows run for Dr. Dean. Mr. Darkmore, you get another foreman. I'll never lift another type for you—blame you and your cowardly son."

"Dead—dead!" exclaimed Jennie, as she bent down over the insensible lad. "Oh, don't say that, Disher! He isn't dead—is he—Mr. Fuller? Poor—poor fellow! I wonder if he has a mother? Oh, father—father, it was a dastardly act, for Bob is not injured at all, and he deserved to be half-killed. Oh, you wretch, 'twas you caused all this trouble. Never speak to me—never look at me again!"

The last expression was directed to Terry, who was staring at the bloody face of his late opponent, as he muttered:

"I hope the fellow is a goner. Old Darkmore will be hung for it. Jennie is too hard on me for a little trick."

Father and son were also staring at the insensible form, and the former kept muttering:

"He had no right to strike my son. 'Twas done in defense of Bob—if he is dead."

Bob did not say a word, but the dark scowl on his cowardly face told that he was pleased at the stranger's mishap.

Living or dead, poor Ben had already made three bitter enemies in Centretown; but he had also gained three good friends.

CHAPTER IV.

A RUSH FOR LIBERTY.

"Please, Mr. Fuller, don't say anything about this trouble in your paper. The poor boy will soon be all right, you see."

"For your sake, I won't, Miss Jennie; but I'd like to——"
 "But you won't, Mr. Fuller."

"I'd like to have the boy in my office," continued the editor of the Gazette. "I don't think he'll ever get a chance here, and I'm kind of taken with the young fellow."

"He will get a chance here, Mr. Fuller, or I'll know why," retorted Fred Disher.

"Why, I thought you were going to leave Mr. Darkmore, Disher?" queried the editor of the rival paper, with a droll smile.

"I'd never make up another form for him, if that young fellow caved," replied Disher; "but as he's all right now, I'm going to take him in hand and make a printer of him. You bet Terry won't tackle him again."

"Don't be too sure of that, Mr. Disher," said Jennie, in low tones. "I know Terry better than you do, and I tell you he'll never forgive the stranger for that licking."

"The stranger is able to lick him every day in the week, Miss Jennie," returned Disher. "Thunder! but I never saw a young fellow fight like him in my life before."

"In open, fair fight, I'm sure the stranger is his master," said the young girl; "but Terry is such a cunning rogue. And then Bob will be sure to plague the stranger, whenever he can do it on the sly. I think it would be better to accept Mr. Fuller's kind offer, and——"

"Excuse me, Miss Jennie," interrupted the foreman, "if I tell you that I won't stand anything of the kind. I want a devil, and this boy suits me to a hair space. If I stay in this office, I'm going to have him with me, for I told him I would. Ben sticks here."

"Father will never like him, Mr. Disher," again remonstrated Jennie.

The foreman smiled at the persistent girl, as he replied:

"Who does he like, Miss Jennie?—except it is yourself. If you boss your husband as you do your father, I wouldn't——"

"Don't be silly, Mr. Disher," laughed the young girl. "But, seriously, I think you will regret keeping this poor stranger here."

"I'll take the chances, Miss Jennie. Here he sticks, while I stick. Mark my words, this young fellow will turn up a trump every time. If your father don't want to board him, I'll make room for him at my place."

"You had better, Mr. Disher," said the young girl. "Father has taken a great dislike to him—that I can see—and I don't think it would be pleasant for him in our house."

"That's all right, Miss Jennie. I'll take the boy in hand. I'm bound to see him through, for I've taken quite a shine to him."

"If he doesn't get along all right here," said the editor of the Gazette, "I'll try and make room for him in my office, Disher. Good-day, my dear Miss Jennie. Not a word about this business in my paper, you may be assured."

And the editor of the rival paper hastened away from the Beagle sanctum muttering:

"How can such an old scalawag have such a girl? There's some mystery about that boy, I'll swear, and Disher knows it. However, 'tis not my business to ferret it out. I guess Tom Darkmore won't attack me in a hurry again."

While this conversation was going on in the sanctum, Ben was sitting on a chair at the foreman's desk in the composing room, and the journeymen and apprentices were working away at their cases, keeping up the steady "click—click" as the types were placed on the rules in the iron "sticks."

Before the doctor arrived, Ben opened his eyes and stared around the scene of the encounter, and then he muttered:

"Give me a drink of water, and I'll lick the other fellow yet. He didn't hit me with his fist—did he, sir?"

"No—no, young fellow," responded the foreman. "But you

won't fight any more to-day. Let us get him into the office, sir."

The editor of the Gazette assisted Disher in bearing the lad into the composing room; and when the doctor arrived and examined his face, he asserted that "his injury wouldn't amount to anything. A mere contusion—that's all."

When Tom Darkmore heard this, he hastened away to the convention, muttering:

"Who is it that young fellow puts me in mind of? I can't make it out. I must let up on Fuller for a while, or he'll rip out on me about this. I don't like that young fellow a bit, and I must get rid of him."

"This young fellow is very weak," continued the doctor, as he felt Ben's pulse, and then looked at his ragged clothes. "Are you hungry, youngster?"

The poor wanderer held down his head, as he stammered forth, while he cast a timid glance at the young girl:

"I—I am not much now—only weak."

"When did you eat last?" demanded the doctor, as he saw the bashful, timid look.

"Two days ago, sir," was the low response.

"Gracious me!" cried Jennie, as she darted from the room. "To think——"

"Bring a little wine, also, Miss Jennie," cried the doctor, who knew that the young girl was hurrying to her father's house next door for substantial nourishment.

"Two days without food," thought Fred Disher, as he looked at his protegee, "and he to fight Terry as he did. My goodness, he'd have killed him if he was in right trim."

A glass of wine, a few sandwiches, a cup of strong coffee, and Ben was all right, so far as the inward man was concerned; but he was a deplorable object to look at outwardly, with his battered face and his ragged clothes, all drenched with water and covered with blood.

Though the weather was still warm, he was shivering in every limb, as he watched the nimble typesetters at work, while he thought:

"Wonder if I'll ever be able to handle the types that way? It's all a mystery to me now. Oh, I do hope that this bad business will not hinder me from——"

"Are you strong enough to come in with me to change your wet clothes, Ben?" inquired Jennie, as she stepped out of the sanctum.

"I—I—I'd rather not, please, miss. If I could get to a fire I'd be all right."

"I say you must come!" commanded the imperative young damsel, as she seized the lad by the shoulder. "If you don't come, I'll never look at you again."

And Ben was compelled to go.

In less than an hour he made his reappearance in the office, dressed up in Black Bob's best suit, and Jennie was at his side, with a smile on her face, as she cried to her brother:

"Father will have to give you a new suit for this, Bob. I think you both ought to feel very glad to get off so easy."

Bob muttered some "cuss" words between his teeth, as he stared at the young fellow in his own Sunday best; but he did not dare offer offense to his sister, as he knew that Jennie was her father's pet, and all-powerful was her influence with the "old skinflint."

Terry looked at his late antagonist for a moment, and a malicious smile played over his battered face, as he grumbled forth, in a low, sneering voice:

"A convict suit would suit the darned sinner better. I believe he escaped from the penitentiary—hang him!"

Ben heard the insulting remarks, and Fred Disher saw that his face grew deadly pale, while his voice was hoarse with excitement as he moved towards Terry, crying:

"Do you want another licking, you loafer? If you say that I am a convict again, I'll kill you—I'll murder you!"

"You are a convict, and you're my prisoner!" rang out a stern voice at the door of the composing room.

All eyes in the room were turned to the door on the instant, and there stood a tall, dark looking man, holding a revolver in his hand, which he had pointed at Ben.

Jennie uttered a cry of terror as she saw the extended weapon, and cried:

"Oh! sir, don't shoot the poor boy!"

"Stand aside, Jennie!" cried the father, who was standing near the tall man, as he bent his scowling eyes on Ben. "That young wretch is a depraved murderer; he——"

"'Tis a lie!" cried Ben, in passionate tones, as he folded his arms on his breast and glared defiantly at the tall officer. "I am not a murderer, and you know it well, Pete Clayton. You treacherous, mean, wicked hound, I'll——"

"Shut up, Ben Revier, or I'll blow your head off!" cried the tall officer. "Stand aside, young lady, till I clap the bracelets on my prisoner. He's a desperate scoundrel, and he's broken jail twice before."

"And I will again, you skunk," cried the undaunted lad. "But you haven't taken me yet, and you won't, Pete Clayton. I'll kill you—and those who set you on me—yet!"

As the convict uttered the last sentence, he turned and dashed for the back door, uttering a yell of defiance as he ran out.

"Stand aside, young lady!" yelled the officer, as Jennie attempted to stop the man. "I'll shoot the rip on sight."

Flinging the young girl aside, the excited man rushed to the door in pursuit, followed by the editor, his daughter, and his employees.

"Shoot him down—kill him!" yelled Terry, as he followed the officer into the back yard. "There goes the skunk over the fence!"

Bang—bang! went the man's revolver, as the fugitive sprang over the fence.

Another yell of defiance from Ben, a cry for mercy from Jennie, and the fugitive was out on the high road, and dashing down towards the river.

"After him! down with him! kill the murdering thief!" yelled Terry, as he outran the others in pursuit. "Stop thief! he's a murderer; he's a convict!"

On after Terry rushed Bob Darkmore, shouting and yelling as he ran; and on after him ran the dark officer, Disher, Jennie, and her scowling father, the latter muttering:

"I hope the officer will kill the young wretch, and not take him back to prison. I thought his face was familiar. Great Caesar, if he gets out of prison again, I'm a ruined man!"

"Don't shoot that boy, stranger!" yelled Fred Disher, as he saw that the fugitive was making for the river. "You can take him easy enough without killing him. Thunder! there he goes into the river. Don't fire, I say!"

"Mind your own business—I guess I know what I'm about," yelled the officer, as they gained the bank. "I'm bound to take that fellow, dead or alive, and I don't care which."

As the man spoke, he took aim at the fugitive, who was swimming to the opposite shore, and the next moment two sharp reports rang out, and then a cry of agony was heard.

"Oh! that was cruel—too cruel, officer," cried Jennie. "The poor fellow has gone down."

"A thousand dollars for those shots, officer," whispered her father into the man's ear. "If he comes up again, I'll make it two, if you kill him."

"He's down—he's gone!" yelled Terry. "There goes his hat—your hat, Bob—floating down the river. Let's get out a boat, till we save your new suit, anyhow?"

"Officer," cried Disher, "you had no right to shoot that

young fellow, and I won't forget it, either. Mr. Fuller, you are a justice of the peace, and I demand that you arrest that man."

"What is the matter?" cried the editor of the Gazette, who had just arrived on the scene, with many others.

"You don't know what you're talking about, stranger," cried the scowling officer, as he still watched the river, while he held the fatal revolver ready to fire again, should the fugitive appear.

"'Twas a cruel outrage," cried Jennie. "To take the poor fellow's life in cold blood."

"Jennie, you must go home," said her father, in harsh tones. "Disher, that young scoundrel, as this officer from Ohio tells me, was a vile murderer. He murdered an old man who had adopted him, and then robbed him. He was sent to the penitentiary for life, and he escaped."

"I guess he's done for," said the officer, as he turned away from the river and addressed Mr. Fuller, who was scrutinizing the man with keen eyes. "My name is Clayton—Pete Clayton—and I'm from Cleveland. I've got all my papers here to show you I'm O.K. As this gentleman says, that young fellow was an escaped convict—a lifer—in for killing the old man who brought him up since he was a child. He near killed two keepers before he broke out of prison; and he'd have killed me, if I'd given him a chance."

"I don't believe he ever murdered anyone," said Fred Disher, stoutly, as he cast an angry glance at the officer.

"I don't believe it, either," said Jennie, "and 'twas base and cowardly of you to——"

"Go home, Jennie," said her father.

"Not till I see if there's any chance of saving him, father," was the firm reply.

But there did not appear to be a shadow of a chance of saving the poor convict.

Terry, Bob Darkmore, and two others, put out in a small boat, rowing up and down the river for some time, without finding a trace of the body of the unfortunate fugitive.

When Jennie returned to her home that evening, her eyes were red with weeping.

There was a grim smile of triumph in her father's face, as he accompanied the Ohio detective to his hotel.

Fred Disher had a fit of the blues for at least three days after; and the folks in the office noticed that he regarded the grim editor with a peculiar smile whenever the latter appeared in the composing room.

As Terry and Black Bob walked home together, the former remarked:

"Wasn't it funny, though, that I should call the snoozer Brevier in christening him, and his real name Revier all the time. Only just putting the cap B before it. I ain't much sorry for him—are you, Bob?"

"Not much, Terry. But you can bet your life on one thing."

"What is that, Bob?"

"Jennie will be eternally down on you and me after this."

"I'm so sorry for that, Bob. I'd sooner lose my right hand than have Jennie right down mad at me."

CHAPTER V.

A STARTLING ANNOUNCEMENT.

Two years have passed away since the evening on which the poor convict lost his life in attempting to escape the detective, and the Centretown Beagle is still alive and flourishing.

Tom Darkmore is still its editor, and that grim-visaged philosopher is now an aspirant for political honors, as he has received the nomination for Congress from his party.

And Franklin Fuller, of the Gazette, is his opponent in the contest.

Ever since the day when Darkmore struck that cowardly blow in the back yard, the rival papers had refrained from "pitching in" to each other, for the simple reason that the editor of the Beagle was afraid to, fearing an exposure of that affair in the Gazette; and also because his daughter has insisted that he must not make any more personal attacks on Mr. Fuller.

But they were political enemies now, and the truce was at an end.

Tom Darkmore commenced the onslaught in a sly, cunning manner, accusing his rival of being a poor wretch, who couldn't pay his notes.

Franklin Fuller retorted by saying that he would sooner "be buried in a pauper's grave than live to ride in his carriage with wealth purchased with the sighs of the widow and the orphan."

And so the battle went on, growing more and more bitter every day, as the election approached.

The editor of the Beagle was seated at his desk, writing a scathing article against his rival, when the foreman entered the sanctum, saying:

"Another kick, editor."

"What's the matter now, Disher?"

"The two jouns demand an advance of five cents more a thousand, and——"

"Sack them, and get other hands—the wretches! Disher, I won't pay it."

"And Bob, your son, wants full jour's wages, also, sir."

"The ungrateful scoundrel! I'm sorry I didn't let them lug him off to prison, when he got into that scrape last year."

"He says he'll clear off to the city if you don't give it, sir."

"Let him clear—hang him. He'll soon fetch up in Sing Sing."

"And Terry says he must have five cents advance, sir," continued the foreman.

The editor bounced up from his chair, his eyes glaring with rage, as he cried:

"This is a vile conspiracy to rob me, Disher, and I'll stop the paper before I'll stand it. I suppose you want an advance, also?"

"That's just what I do want, Mr. Darkmore, and no mistake. Fuller's foreman has just left him, and he's offered me the sit, with three dollars advance over what you're giving me."

"You can all go to Jericho!" yelled the angry man. "I'll get hands in the city—I'll get up 'patent' insides—I'll see you all hanged——"

"Benson and Perkins—two old soldiers—swear they'll take the stump against you," interrupted the aggravating Disher, "unless you come down. It will have a fine effect for Fuller with the workingmen in the district to have two of your hands going about telling that you wouldn't pay them as well as him—after you calling him a poor wretch that can't meet his notes."

"They can go to thunder, and say what they like!" cried the angry editor. "I can buy up all the votes I want, but I won't be bluffed in this way."

"Then you won't come down, sir?"

"Not one cent more."

"Then it's a big kick, Mr. Darkmore. You can get other hands."

"I'd like to kick you all out of my office, choke you, you robbers!"

And the infuriated man slammed the door after his foreman, as he uttered fierce oaths and threats against his employes.

"This is a put-up job of Fuller's," he hissed. "He's bought up Disher, after the way I have treated him. And my own son, too—curse him! Oh, to think that I committed a great crime to make him a rich man hereafter. But he shan't have a cent of my money. I'll leave it all to Jennie."

The foreman, with the two jouns and the two apprentices, were marching out in a body, leaving the devil alone in the composing room, when they encountered Jennie at the door.

"What's the matter now, Disher?" inquired the young girl.

"We've all struck, Miss Jennie. A big kick for more wages."

"Do you think it's just fair to strike now, Disher, when father is a candidate for office—to take him at a disadvantage?"

"We asked him for an advance often before, Miss Jennie," said the one-armed printer, "and he wouldn't give it. We'll show him up now."

"The Gazette is paying what we ask," remarked Josh Perkins, "and 'tis only fair."

"I think you are all acting in an unkind, ungenerous manner," said the spirited girl, "to force father to pay you an advance now, when he's running for office. Why didn't you strike and leave before, when he refused you? Father may not be the most generous man in the world, but he has always paid you promptly when he agreed, and you should not turn on him now. I'm glad he has refused you. I'm glad he has spirit enough to defy you, if he's never elected. I'm ashamed of you."

The foreman felt the rebuke keenly, but before he could reply, a husky voice behind the young girl cried out:

"Those are sound sentiments, young lady, and I'll stand to your father in the strike."

The printers and the young girl turned to the speaker, and they saw that he was an old man, with gray hair and beard and wearing spectacles.

The stranger's well-worn summer suit told of weary travels over dusty roads; an old straw hat covered his venerable head, while his shoes were held together by strings and thongs.

"Who in thunder are you?" demanded the striking foreman, as he glared angrily at the old customer.

"An old tramp printer," was the husky reply, "and I'm looking for a job."

"You'll get your head broke, you old snook," cried the pugnacious Terry, "if you offer to rat it while we're on the strike."

"I'll risk all that, young feller," replied the old tramp. "I'm not a rat, and I know the rules of the trade better than you do, for I have worked in most of the great cities of the union."

"Do you call it square to take the sit of a man who's on the strike for fair wages, old man?" demanded Disher.

"When did you demand this advance?" inquired the old tramp.

"Not ten minutes ago," replied Disher.

"And do you call it square to walk right out of an office on ten minutes' notice?" queried the old man, with a smile.

This was a "sticker" for Disher, and before he could reply, the old tramp continued:

"I am hard up, and I do want work, but I wouldn't cut a man out, if I was to die on the roadside. From what this young lady says, you have treated the boss very shabbily—left him in a hole at a time when his opponent will make capital out of it. That wasn't on the square. You should have given him, at least, a week's notice."

"Get out of here, you old fraud, or we'll bust your whole head in," said Terry, as he attempted to push the old man from the doorway in a rough manner.

"Hands off, young feller, or you'll be sorry," remonstrated the old fellow.

"Get out, you old loafer," cried Terry, as he continued to push the stranger. "If you wasn't so old, I'd kick the head off you."

"I'm young enough to lick half a dozen like you," cried the old stranger, as he let fly out at his assailant, hitting him between the eyes.

"Serve you right, Terry," cried Jennie, as the young rascal measured his length on the sidewalk. "Come in to father, old man. We'll get out the paper somehow, for I can set type."

Terry was dazed for some moments, as he stared at the old stranger, while his companions gave vent to loud bursts of laughter at his expense.

"The old man is a bruiser," cried Black Bob; "he knocked Terry out of time in one round."

Terry sprang to his feet, uttering a bitter oath, and rushed at the old tramp, crying:

"I'll mash the whole head off the old rat. I'll——"

Out went the old tramp's right hand, and down went Terry again, his head striking the hard pavement.

"Don't call me a rat again, or I'll hurt you badly, young feller," he cried. "Now, get up and apologize, or——"

"Kill the old snoozer, fellows," cried Black Bob, as he sprang on the old man from behind and struck him on the back of the head.

The blow was a wicked one, and it sent the old printer staggering against the side of the house; but he recovered himself on the instant, and turned to face his new assailant, as the foreman sang out:

"Hold on, Bob. Two against one ain't a fair shake nohow, and he an old man."

"'Tis a shame," cried Jennie, as she pushed her brother aside. "Come in with me, old man."

"Not till I've licked this young feller first, miss," replied the old printer. "He struck me foul, and I'm going to give him three for it."

"Won't you stand to me, fellers?" cried the cowardly Bob, as the old man made for him. "Terry—Terry, hitch in with me."

The "fellers" responded by shouts of derision, as the old printer, after planting three rattling blows on the coward's face, sent him flying into the office; while Terry did not move from the pavement.

"Terry is knocked out of time," cried Disher. "Hanged if you haven't stunned him, old man."

"Had no business to call me a rat," replied the tramp. "Guess he'll soon be all right."

But Terry was not all right, as he had struck his head on the pavement when the old fellow knocked him down, and there wasn't a stir in him when the foreman bent down to assist him.

"Help me to get him into the office," said Disher, as a crowd gathered around the door. "You're a regular old bruiser, stranger."

"Guess I can take my part," replied the old printer, as he assisted Disher in bearing the miserable fellow into the house.

The editor had watched the encounter from the window of his sanctum, and as he saw Terry borne into the office, he muttered:

"I'm sorry the old fellow didn't lick the whole crowd. I'll compromise with them until after the election, and then I'll sack them all. If that old fellow is a good hand, I'll give him Disher's place. I hope Terry will be laid up for a week."

Terry was laid up for more than two weeks, as he fractured his right hand in falling on the pavement, though he recovered his senses in half an hour after.

The old tramp was put on in his place, Tom Darkmore having compromised with his hands, by acceding to their demands for the time.

On the very night of the old tramp's appearance in the town, Pete Clayton, the Cleveland detective, entered the Beagle sanctum, and the officer's left arm was in a sling.

"Hello, Clayton," cried Tom Darkmore, as he welcomed the detective. "Have you come on to give me a lift in the election? What's the matter with your arm, man?"

The detective closed the door, ere he replied in a low voice:

"I came on here, Tom Darkmore, to kill or capture Ben Revier."

"Ben Revier!" gasped the editor. "Great goodness, he's dead these two years!"

"He's alive and kicking. I saw him in Cleveland one week ago, and he shot me in the arm here, while aiming at my heart, when I tried to arrest him."

"Great goodness, Clayton, I'm a ruined man if he comes here again; and just before the election at that," groaned Tom Darkmore.

"He will come here," said the detective, in serious tones.

"Has he learned the secret of his birth?" inquired the editor.

"I'm afraid he has—for he's on the trail, as sure as death."

"Then we must kill him, Clayton, or he'll ruin me and kill you," hissed the editor.

"That's what I came on here for," said the tall detective. "We must make sure of him this time, for I tell you he's no slouch to deal with, as he near fetched me."

CHAPTER VI.

JENNIE RECEIVES A SHOCK.

The old tramp—who called himself Jack Jones—turned out to be an excellent printer. In fact, he was a regular "rusher."

He could set more type in a day than the two cripples; he worked with a graceful, easy motion that was not wearying; and he made very few mistakes—a splendid recommendation for anyone engaged in the "art preservative."

Before Jack Jones was employed in the office three days, the foreman and the other hands had him down as "a queer Dick," "a strange customer," and "a regular character."

The foreman offered to recommend him to a boarding house; but, saying that his wardrobe was not in good trim, he requested permission to sleep in the office, as he was accustomed to roughing it.

With some old mailbags for a bed and a bundle of papers for a pillow, Jack Jones "bunked it" on the folding table.

He did not indulge in whisky or tobacco; and simple, indeed, was the food he consumed to sustain life, as a cup of milk and a roll for breakfast, crackers and cheese with some raw tomatoes for dinner, with peaches and crackers for supper, constituted his daily diet.

At first, the hands in the office regarded him as a miser, but when two weeks had elapsed, they saw that he was more than liberal with his earnings.

Jack Jones did not spend his money in the clothes, but he gave freely to every poor tramp who passed along; and the "devil," who brought him his humble food from the grocery store, was always amply repaid for the extra trouble; while the poor woman who washed his shirts blessed him for his generosity.

And the old tramp, though never speaking of his private life, was most entertaining, as he was always telling the "boys" of his adventures in the great cities and far-away towns, where he had worked at the business.

Though the old man's voice was quite hoarse, there was a

charm about the tones that attracted the listeners; and it was noted that he always spoke in kindly tones of the poor tramps he had encountered in his ramblings.

Jennie Darkmore was strangely attracted to the old fellow, and the spirited girl, who was then in the dawn of womanly beauty, would stand at his case for hours, chatting with him and listening to the accounts of his travels.

Tom Darkmore did not take much notice of the old printer, as he was very busy with the election, as well as uneasy about his young enemy; but the stingy man did remark on pay days, that the "old fellow made very large bills."

On the night before election day, Tom Darkmore and the Cleveland detective were seated in the sanctum, and engaged in earnest conversation.

They could hear the old printer snoring away on his rude bed in the composing room, while on the street a band of music was playing to attract voters to a political meeting, held in favor of the editor of the Beagle.

"You're sure he's in town, Clayton?" inquired the nervous editor. "Maybe he has some friend here who sent you that letter."

"I'm sure he's here himself. He's not the fellow to trust anyone with his business. He's in town watching us and preparing for a deadly fight," replied the detective.

"Then he must be thoroughly disguised, Clayton, or he must be in hiding."

"More than likely he's disguised. Oh, I tell you we have not a fool to deal with—hear that old fellow snore?"

"Yes—yes; but what can we do? He tells you in that letter that he's going right to work at us. We must get at him first. We must kill him. Will you come down and hear me speak, and we'll talk about this fellow after?"

"I'm played out chasing that young skunk up," replied the detective. "I'll rest here and think until you come back."

The nervous editor left the office to hasten away to the meeting, and the detective rested his head on the desk to think—and to sleep.

And the old printer was still snoring away on his hard bed in the composing room.

Ten minutes after the wary detective was left alone in the sanctum, a tall young fellow entered the room with stealthy steps, and approached the sleeping officer.

A grim smile was on that mild young face, as the blue eyes were bent on the sleeper; and then a heavy club was raised to fall with stunning effect on the weary detective's head, knocking him from the chair to the floor of the sanctum.

When the dark-faced detective opened his eyes again, his hands were bound behind him, and that mild-faced youth was standing over him, holding his own revolver to the half-dazed man's head, as he uttered the threat:

"Speak one word, Pete Clayton—offer to raise a single cry, and you are a dead man! You know me; you know I'm desperate; you know you deserve death at my hands. Come with me."

"What are you up to, Ben Revier?" gasped the defeated man; "are you going to murder me?"

"I'm going to make you my prisoner now, and I will murder you as sure as fate, unless you do what I ask," was the young man's reply. "You know what I'm after. Come with me, and you are a dead man if you say a word as we go along. Come, I say, or I'll kill you now!"

The detective saw death in that bright weapon, and in the flashing blue eyes before him, and, brave man though he was, he arose from the floor and walked before his captor towards the door, muttering between his teeth:

"This fellow means to kill me when he gets me out on the street. I'd give every dollar I have to meet someone—Hello, Miss Jennie, I—I—I——"

"One word more," whispered Ben, into his ear, as he saw the young girl watching them in the entry, "and I'll fire!"

"What's the matter, Mr. Clayton?" cried Jennie, as she saw that the detective was a bound prisoner. "Who is this young man?"

"I'm an officer from the west, young lady," replied Ben; "and this is my——"

"Gracious!" gasped the young girl, as she stared at the young fellow. "'Tis the young man I saw drowning two years ago. What mystery is this, Mr. Clayton? I can't believe my eyes. Help—father! Mr. Jones—help!"

While Jennie was uttering these cries, the young fellow was forcing his prisoner out into the dark street, still holding the revolver at his head, as he hissed into his ear:

"One word, and you're a dead man! It's my turn at last, you infernal wretch!"

Ere the young fellow had gained the street with his prisoner, Jennie had sunk insensible in the hall, as the excited girl believed that she saw the ghost of the young lad who was murdered in the river by the detective.

When the young girl opened her eyes again, she was seated on a chair in her father's sanctum, and the old printer, Jack Jones, was bending over her, inquiring, in a hoarse voice:

"What scared you so, Miss Jennie? I heard you yell, and woke up out of my sleep, to find you lying in a faint in the hall."

CHAPTER VII.

STRANGE REVELATIONS.

The young girl stared at the old printer for some moments, ere she stammered forth:

"I was awfully frightened, Mr. Jones. I saw a ghost!"

"Saw a ghost, Miss Jennie! Why, you look like a ghost yourself. What is the matter, dear young lady?"

"You are laughing at me, Mr. Jones," pouted Jennie. "But I tell you I did see a ghost. You remember my telling you about the poor young fellow who was shot down in the river?"

"I do, Miss Jennie."

"Well, sir, as sure as you stand there before me now I saw his ghost a short time ago, and he was spiriting away the man who shot him. You've seen Mr. Clayton—father's friend from Cleveland?"

"The detective, Miss Jennie?"

"Yes, the detective," replied the young girl. "He had him bound like a prisoner, and he led him out of this office into the hall, where I met them. You heard me call out?"

"It woke me up, Miss Jennie, and I ran out to find you lying senseless in the hall outside there. But about the ghost."

"You don't believe in ghosts, Mr. Jones?"

"I can't say that I do, Miss Jennie."

"I don't, either, sir," said the girl, as she sprang to her feet and confronted the old man with flashing eyes. "You think you are very smart, but you can't deceive me."

"What do you mean, Miss Jennie?" inquired the old printer, as he met the indignant girl's penetrating eyes.

"What do I mean? You know well enough what I mean. What do you mean? What is your object in assuming that disguise, sir?"

"What disguise, Miss Jennie?" asked the old fellow in his husky tones. "I'm sure I can't understand you, young lady."

"Understand me now, then!"

As the spirited girl uttered these words, she made a grab at the pretended old man's false whiskers and tore them from his face.

"You know me, then, Miss Jennie," faltered the betrayed lad, as he stared at the young girl with admiring eyes.

"Know you! Of course I know you, Ben Brevier. I knew you from the very first."

"From the very first, Miss Jennie, and you didn't betray me?"

"Why should I betray you, unfortunate young man? I pitied you the first day you came to the office two years ago, and I almost cried for you—yes, I did cry—when I thought you were shot in the river."

"Then you won't betray me now, Miss Jennie?" pleaded Ben, as he attempted to seize the young girl's hand.

"I will betray you—I'll denounce you," cried Jennie, as she drew back, "unless you tell me what you mean to do."

The young man looked at the girl for a few moments, and he asked himself this question ere he returned a reply:

"Can I trust her, fighting against her father, as I am? No—no, she would betray me, if she knew I intended his exposure and ruin. I'll have to fool her somehow."

Jennie noticed the young man's thoughtful face, as she cried:

"Now, you are trying to invent some story, to put me off—to tell me lies. Young man, if you are wise you will tell me the truth, and answer my questions candidly. Trust to me, and you'll not regret it."

"I will trust to you, Miss Jennie," returned Ben, in earnest tones. "Now, ask me what you like about myself."

"In the first place, then, when you first came to this town, you had an object in coming here, and you were not as poor and hungry as you pretended?"

"I was poor and hungry, Miss Jennie," replied Ben. "I had only escaped from the Ohio prison a few weeks before. I had an object in coming to this town."

"What was that object?" demanded Jennie.

"To find the man who had robbed me of my property—the fiend who had incited another to murder my poor mother!" was the bitter reply, as Ben clenched his hands.

"Murdered your mother? Robbed you of your property?" exclaimed Jennie.

"Yes, Miss Jennie. And the same villains tried to murder me, by accusing me of a crime that I am as innocent of as you are. I haven't time to tell you the particulars now, as your father will soon be back from the meeting, to look for the skunk, Pete Clayton."

"What has my father to do with it, young man?" demanded Jennie, as her face grew deathly pale. "Don't attempt to deceive me. I will find out the whole truth. Beware, if you offer to injure my father."

"Injure your father?" returned Ben, in passionate tones. "Young lady, I'm sorry to say, for your sake, that he is a fiend—a scoundrel of the worst kind. I'm going to crush him—I'm going to expose him! I'll not rest until I have avenged my wrongs on him, for he is the author of them all. Oh, Miss Jennie, it goes to my heart to think he is your father!"

The young girl was appalled for the moment at this fiery denunciation; but her brave heart soon responded to her paternal feelings, and she rejoined in determined tones, while her expressive eyes flashed with indignation:

"You are a lying, sneaking rascal, so you are, and I don't believe a word you say against my father. He may be close in money matters, but he is an honest man; and I will not believe a word you say against him. Ben Brevier, or whatever your name may be, don't forget that you have me to deal with also, while plotting against my father. You injure him—you attempt or offer to touch him, and I'll kill you. How did you escape from the river that day? Answer me that, and don't attempt to lie to me any more. It won't do."

"I'm not lying, Miss Jennie, as you will find out one of these days. I escaped from the river by diving, when that

skunk, Pete Clayton, fired at me. I soon managed to hide on the other side, in the weeds."

"And now you are back here to try and crush my father?" continued the agitated girl. "What did you do with Mr. Clayton to-night, when you forced him from here, after chloroforming me? You are very smart, ain't you?"

A slight smile passed over the young man's face, as he replied:

"Then you know that I chloroformed you, Miss Jennie? Well, I didn't mean to injure you; but I am fighting against terrible enemies, and I cannot stand on ceremony."

"Where is Mr. Clayton now?" demanded Jennie, in resolute tones.

"I cannot answer you, Miss Jennie. He is my prisoner at present. If I had not got the best of him he would kill me. The world is too small to hold the two of us."

"Then you mean to murder him—murder my father?"

"I mean to hold Pete Clayton until I can prove murder against him, Miss Jennie; and then I will hang him, as he tried to do to me. I mean to make your father suffer for his crimes, and compel him to give me back my property."

The young man fixed his expressive, determined eyes on the young girl, as he uttered these words, and she realized once and for all that there was no "back-down" in him; that he would pursue her father to the bitter end.

The young girl felt that there was some truth in his assertions, but she could not bring herself to believe that her father was the scoundrel thus pictured; and she was determined to save him from the vengeance of the young man.

"You say, Miss Jennie, that you don't believe what I tell you about your father?"

"Why should I? Do you think I'm crazy? He has been the best of fathers to me. He is kind and good to mother."

"If you should hear your father confess to all that I charge him with," inquired Ben, "would you believe me then? Would you blame me—oppose me in trying to crush him?"

"That is out of the question," returned Jennie, with an indignant toss of the head. "My father confess to such crimes!"

"I promise you—I swear to you—Miss Jennie," returned the young man, "that you will hear the confession from his own lips, and this very night, if you will but do as I ask you?"

"What is that?" demanded Jennie.

"Just go into the composing room, and wait there until he comes. He'll soon be back from the meeting, to see Pete Clayton. He'll be alone, and I'll meet him here."

"Who and what are you, anyhow?" inquired the young girl, abruptly.

"I am your own cousin, Miss Jennie. My mother—my murdered mother—was your father's sister."

"Then you are the cousin in Ohio that I heard about when I was a little girl. I heard that you were dead, and that——"

"I hear your father's footsteps on the street, Miss Jennie," continued the young man, as he pushed his cousin into the printing office, while he resumed his disguise. "Hush, and don't fear that I'll hurt your father to-night. Sit there at Disher's desk, and you can hear all that passes between us. Believe me, but you won't think so bad of me an hour from now."

"If you injure my father—innocent or guilty—I'll never forgive you, cousin," whispered Jennie, as footsteps were heard in the hall. "Oh, Ben, remember he is my father. I liked you from the moment I first saw you."

"And I loved you, Jennie—dearly loved you—from the day you were so kind to me—the poor, friendless tramp. I love you now, Jennie. I will love you until I die."

A pressure of the hand, a few whispered words of assurance, and the disguised youth stole to his hard resting-place, leaving the agitated girl sitting in the gloom at Disher's desk.

A few moments later, and Tom Darkmore was heard in his office, muttering aloud:

"What in the mischief has become of Pete Clayton? He promised to wait here for me. I feel terribly worried about that young scoundrel to-night. Hear that old fellow snoring! Perhaps Clayton left some word with him. Jones, I say, Jones. Wake up, old fellow, and come in here."

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEARFUL DENUNCIATION.

"Did you call me, sir?"

"To be sure I called you. Why weren't you down at the meeting? All the other hands were there, and we had a rousing meeting."

"I worked hard to-day, Mr. Darkmore, and I felt like sleeping. I am an old man, you know, and I need rest," returned the pretended old jour, in his hoarse tones.

"Hum—ha—yes. You make very big bills for an old man. Did you see what became of my friend, Mr. Clayton? Did he leave any word for me? Thunders, this office is all upset. There's been a row here. Didn't you hear anything going on here during the past hour? What kind of an old sleepy head are you?"

"I did hear a row going on in here, but I didn't think 'twas my business to interfere," replied the disguised lad, as he bent his keen eyes on the suspicious man. "A young fellow come in here and tackled your friend, Mr. Clayton."

"The thunder you say. And Clayton took him off a prisoner, of course. That's good—that's right good news. The cheek of the scoundrel coming to my office."

"He did seem to be a cheeky kind of a young fellow," responded the pretended old man, in sarcastic tones, "for he lugged your friend off as a prisoner."

"What!" yelled Tom Darkmore. "Are you crazy, old man? The young rascal lugged my friend, Mr. Clayton, the detective from Ohio, off as a prisoner! You were dreaming, old man!"

"Nary dream, sir. I saw the young fellow lug your big friend away with him, a pistol to his head, and his arms bound fast behind him. And the last words the young fellow said was that he'd come back here to meet you. He told me to tell you so."

"Thunder and lightning!" gasped the terror-stricken man, as he fidgeted about his desk, "and I haven't got my revolver here. You can fight, old man. Stand to me to kill that young rascal, and I'll make it all right for you. He's an escaped convict from Ohio—in for murder. Have you got a pistol?"

"I never carry one, sir."

"Thunders! what will we do? Just step into the house and get mine. Jennie will give it to you. I daren't leave here. Lock the door after you. Don't say anything to Jennie about this young fellow. Just tell her I want the pistol, as I'll be out late electioneering. Great Cæsar! I knew that something was going to happen to me to-night."

The last sentence was uttered as the disguised Ben was hastening from the house, and as the disturbed man wailed out the words he pressed his hands to his throbbing brow.

"There's no use talking," he continued, speaking loud enough to be heard by his agitated daughter. "But there's no peace in this world for a man who commits a great crime. Just think of this young fellow, whom I was certain I saw going down the river, with a bullet in his head, coming back here to plague me—to ruin me—to drag me to prison. But, by thunder, he ain't conquered me yet! Wonder what he's done with

Pete Clayton? 'Twouldn't be his game to— Back already, old man? Got the shooter?"

"I have," was the reply from the hall, and in a strange voice.

"Who in the thunder is that? Great goodness, 'tis the young fellow himself!"

"Yes, Mr. Darkmore," replied Ben, as he entered the office without any disguise, and presenting his revolver at his uncle's head. "I am here to settle old accounts with you. Speak a loud word—call out—and the reckoning will be short."

"Do you mean to murder me, then?" gasped the terrified man, as he sank back in his chair and stared up at his nephew.

"I came here to serve you as I have already served that villain, Pete Clayton," was the stern reply. "He is my prisoner now. He will be hung before he is much older. Come with me, sir. You are my prisoner."

"Your prisoner!" gasped Tom Darkmore. "What am I accused of, young fellow? You are going too fast. You can't prove anything against me. I will defy you."

A scornful laugh burst from Ben as he drew nearer to his uncle, and still presenting the revolver at his head.

"You are in a bad box, and you feel it already, uncle. Know at once, then, that Pete Clayton has confessed all to me."

"Confessed!" groaned the miserable man. "What has he confessed?"

"He has confessed, and I have it in writing under his signature, that you paid him two thousand dollars for taking my poor mother to a lunatic asylum in Ohio, so that you could get hold of her property. He has——"

"'Tis a lie," cried Tom Darkmore. "I never knew the man until——"

"Until you met him, when he was a gambler, on the Ohio river," interrupted Ben, with a sneering smile. "But I can't stand here fooling all night, and you must come with me."

"What do you mean to do with me?" gasped the terrified man.

"I mean to force you to give up all the property you stole from me. I mean to make you confess that you murdered my poor mother, by sending her to a lunatic asylum, and breaking her heart, when she was as sound of mind as you were. I mean to make you suffer for driving me an orphan on the world; and then, when I found a good friend and protector, getting that scoundrel, Pete Clayton, to murder the good old man, and charging me with the crime. I mean——"

"Oh, mercy!" gasped Tom Darkmore; "you must have some mercy. I will make amends for all I did to you. I will restore your property. Don't expose me, for my family's sake, young man. Just think, the election is coming off to-morrow, and I am sure to be elected. Only think what people will say! My poor Jennie, my darling girl, will break her heart. Mercy, young man, for her sake!"

And poor Jennie, at that moment, was sobbing and crying as if her heart was breaking.

"Then you confess all, uncle?" inquired Ben, in a loud voice.

"Confess nothing," yelled another voice at the window of the office. "I'll fetch you this time, you young hound."

Jennie heard that strange voice; and then she heard the report of a pistol.

Uttering a cry of agony, the young girl burst into the office, expecting to see her father dead. There stood her father, clutching Ben by the throat, while in through the window the detective was springing.

CHAPTER IX.

BEN FACES HIS FOES AGAIN.

"Kill the young skunk, Darkmore," cried the detective, as he sprang in through the window. "Ha, ha! you young devil! My shot told, did it? And that tells, too."

Pete Clayton seized Ben by the collar with one hand, and

dealt him a blow in the face with the barrel of his revolver at the same time.

In the meantime, Tom Darkmore, gaining courage from the presence of his powerful ally, was clutching the young man by the throat and endeavoring to drag him down on the chair, while Ben, half dazed by a wound on the forehead from the detective's revolver, offered but little or no resistance.

Jennie stood at the door for a few moments, her eyes glaring with indignation, and her beautiful young face as pale as death, as she watched the unequal struggle.

"Shame, father, shame!" she cried, at length, as she sprang forward and seized her parent's hand, pushing the detective rudely aside at the same moment. "Would you murder the young man, and he your sister's child? Touch him again, you scoundrel, and I'll shoot you."

Jennie snatched the revolver from the hands of the half-dazed lad as she uttered these words, and presented it full at the detective's face.

"Go into the house, Jennie, and mind your own business," cried her father, as Ben sank on the chair. "If you say a word about what you heard to-night, I'll——"

"I don't care what you do, cruel father," cried the young girl, as she bent over the wounded lad and endeavored to stop the flow of blood by pressing her handkerchief to his forehead. "Are you much hurt, poor fellow. You are not going to die—are you?"

"Not much," cried Ben, springing up and confronting his enemies. "I was only knocked out of time for a moment. Let me have that pistol, and bless you. Ha, Pete Clayton, I'm ready for you now, you infernal skunk."

"Stand aside, girl, till I shoot him down like a dog!" cried the detective. "You stand aside, girl, or I'll have to give you a dose of lead."

"Don't you dare to do it, Clayton," cried Tom Darkmore, seizing his daughter. "Get home, I say, Jennie. I'm a ruined, disgraced man if that young wretch conquers. He must die!"

At that moment footsteps were heard in the entry, and then a voice sang out:

"Halloo, what's all this row about? Choke me to death if there ain't the devil what was shot and drowned in the river! Jerusalem, if it ain't a real ghost! Look, Bob!"

And Terry Mallon and Bob Darkmore stood at the office door, staring at Ben and the others.

Once glance from Jennie at the newcomers told her that Ben had two more enemies to contend with, and quick as thought, she flung her arms around the hunted lad, as she forced him back to the window, while she whispered into his ear:

"Escape by the window. You cannot fight them all now. You can appear again in your old disguise, and they won't recognize you. I'll be your friend forever, as I'm sure you've been wronged."

Ben sprang out of the window, while Jennie covered his retreat by placing herself before it, as she cried out to Terry and her brother:

"Don't you offer to follow him, or he'll shoot you down like dogs. Shut that door, Terry. You, Bob, stay where you are. Don't touch me, sir, or I'll dash that lamp in your face."

"Curse the girl!" yelled the detective, as he endeavored to drag Jennie from the window, in order to follow Ben.

"Curse you for a darned loafer!" yelled Terry, springing forward and dealing the detective a blow on the side of the head. "How dare you touch or curse Miss Jennie! Oh, you can't scare this child with your black looks. I carry a pistol and I'll use it, too, if you put on any airs."

"Take that, you young cur," cried the detective, dealing Terry a stunning blow in the face with his revolver.

And then the baffled man was out through the window like a flash.

Jennie looked after him for a moment, and saw him running along the street, while they could all hear his cries of:

"Murder—murder! Stop thief! Police—police!"

"Choke me if I don't get even with that big loafer for that blow," grumbled Terry, as he listened to the cries. "What is the row, anyhow, Miss Jennie? Thunder, the boss is a goner!"

Jennie turned to her father, and she uttered a cry of alarm as she saw that he had sunk insensible on the editorial chair.

"Run and get some water, Terry," she said. "You, Bob, send for the doctor. Mind, and don't tell anyone what happened here. Poor father is awfully excited over the election."

In the meantime, the detectives' cries had aroused all the people in the neighborhood, and in less than ten minutes a hundred men, including the police, were out in search of the escaped convict—the convicted murderer.

When Tom Darkmore opened his eyes again, he was still reclining on the arm-chair in his office, and the doctor was standing at his side, while his son and daughter, with Terry, Fred Disher, and the old jour were watching him.

"You'll soon be all right now, Mr. Darkmore," said the doctor. "Too much excitement altogether in this election."

"Yes—yes," muttered Darkmore, as he stared from his daughter to the others, until his eye rested on the pretended old jour. "Where's that pistol I sent you for, you old fool?"

Jennie and the disguised youth interchanged expressive glances, ere Ben replied:

"I met with an accident, sir."

"An accident. How's that?"

And the editor bent a suspicious look on his journeyman, as he thought to himself:

"I'll bet a hundred to one this old fraud is in league with the young wretch."

"As I was going out to get the revolver," replied the disguised Ben, "I struck against a young fellow and he knocked me kiting under the stoop with a slungshot. See where he hit me on the forehead."

And the disguised lad pointed to the wound on his forehead, where the ball from Pete Clayton's weapon had torn the skin, which was now covered with court-plaster.

"Where's Clayton? Did he kill the young scoundrel?" demanded the editor, springing up from his chair.

"Here I am, Mr. Darkmore," cried the flushed detective, rushing into the office. "We have been chasing him all over the town, and we can't find a trace of him. Halloo, old fellow, what's the matter with your head?"

The detective turned abruptly on the disguised lad as he asked this question; and Jennie trembled like a coward as she saw that the man's keen eyes were fastened on her young cousin.

"I got knocked over, sir," replied Ben, in his husky tones, "by a young fellow what I struck against out there, and——"

"You'll get knocked over again, you infernal fraud!" cried the enraged detective, as he rushed at the disguised lad.

"And so will you, you darned loafer!" yelled Terry, as he sprang on the detective with a heavy mallet. "I've been just laying for you, I have, and now we're square."

The detective was knocked on the floor by the vengeful blow, and Terry stood over him, ready to repeat the dose, as he cried:

"I'll show you, to come in here tackling us fellows with your shooters."

"You young scoundrel," yelled the editor, as he dashed at Terry. "How dare you assault my friend—you loafer!"

"Fly—fly!" whispered Jennie, into Ben's ear. "He has recognized you, and you will be murdered if you remain. Get

out, and slip into our house—into my room—until I go in. Haste—haste, before he denounces you!”

Jennie pushed him out into the hall while she tendered this advice, and her father had seized and was struggling with Terry at the moment.

The detective was half-stunned by the blow from Terry's mallet, but he could still comprehend what was passing around him, and he cried:

“Grab that old fellow, Darkmore. Curse you for a young loafer!”

“I'll take your advice, Jennie,” muttered Ben, as he slipped out into the street. “Never you mind, but I'll rig up a disguise he won't detect me in. I'm bound to lick the skunk, or I'll die trying.”

CHAPTER X.

BAFFLING THE ENEMY.

“They are hunting for you all over town, Ben, and the detective swears he'll shoot you the moment he catches you.”

“Be it so, Jennie. You can bet your life I'll not turn away from him.”

“I do think it would be better for you to go away for the present. You surely don't mean to prosecute father, if I can prevail on him to set you right?”

“I will let up on him, Jennie—for your sake—but he must let up on me. As for Pete Clayton, 'tis war to the death between us forever. I'm bound to hang him.”

The foregoing conversation occurred in Jennie's room, where the anxious girl was endeavoring to coax her cousin to fly the town, and while her father and the determined detective were chasing him high and low.

Though Jennie was convinced that her father had committed a great crime, yet, like a devoted daughter, she was resolved on saving him from disgrace by compelling him to disgorge his ill-gotten wealth, and thereby winning Ben to silence.

She was well aware that Ben loved her, and that he would forego vengeance on her father for her sake; but she dreaded the young fellow encountering the detective, and she feared the bad man's influence over her father.

Ben knew that Pete Clayton would not let up on him; and he was resolved on fighting the battle out to the bitter end, even though death or imprisonment threatened him.

And now the trouble was—how could he crush the detective and drag him back to Cleveland without exposing Jennie's father.

It was not Ben's purpose to kill Pete Clayton without first proving his own innocence, which he intended to do by compelling the man to confess his guilt, and in the presence of witnesses.

With this in view, the young man had forced the detective into an old deserted shanty, when he succeeded in capturing him in the early part of the night; but Pete Clayton burst the cords that bound him, forced his way out of the hut, and returned to assail his young enemy in the office of the Beagle.

Jennie was most anxious to get Ben out of the town that night, ere he would be forced to denounce her father on the eve of election.

And Ben, though willing to forego his vengeance against her father, preferred to remain and have it out with Pete Clayton.

As the keen-eyed detective had recognized him in the disguise of the old printer, it would be necessary to assume another, and to this end he was now consulting Jennie, while

she was insisting on aiding him in the matter on condition that he should leave the town.

“If you remain here, Ben, you will either get killed yourself, or you will bring sad trouble on father,” she continued. “Why can't you get away—follow Mr. Clayton back to Cleveland, and punish him there, without getting father into the scrape at all?”

“Yes, and I'd have your father and Pete Clayton on my track on the instant. Jennie, unless you can manage to scare him well, he'll be advised by Clayton and never let up on me till I am back in prison or dead. You know he is too fond of money to——”

“Jennie—Jennie,” sang out her father, from the hall below.

“Yes, father,” returned the young girl. “Hide in that closet, Ben. They'll never think of looking for you there.”

And Jennie darted out of the room, while Ben entered the closet.

As the young girl left the room door open, the fugitive could hear the editor's voice as he commenced at Jennie.

“Jennie,” he said, “we have hunted for that young scoundrel all over town; and Terry there says that he saw him enter at the back here, when he ran out of the office. Can he be hiding in this house?”

“That is simply ridiculous, father,” replied Jennie, as she fixed her bright eyes on the detective. “Will you step down to the dining room with me? I do so want to speak to you in private, father.”

The keen-eyed detective saw at once that Jennie knew more than she pretended, and as he feared her influence over her father, he was eager to hear what she had to say.

“Want to speak to me in private, Jennie?” returned her father, as he looked at Pete Clayton; “this gentleman is my——”

“Evil genius, father!” whispered Jennie, drawing him aside.

“I am your father's confidential friend,” said the detective, as he attempted to follow them. “If you have anything to tell him about this young scoundrel, it is important for me to hear it.”

Jennie hesitated for a moment, and looked from one to the other ere she replied.

The young girl was meditating a bold maneuver, whereby to bluff the detective, force him from the pursuit of Ben, and thereby save her father and her cousin at the same time.

Her brother Bob and Terry were standing in the hall regarding her with suspicious eyes, while her mother, who was somewhat of an invalid, was reclining on an easy chair in the front sitting room.

Jennie knew that she could force Terry to do her bidding, even though he was compelled to assist his old enemy; but she did not dare to trust her treacherous brother, who hated her on account of the influence she possessed over her stern, ambitious father.

A bright flush swept over Jennie's face, and her eyes flashed with a dangerous light, as she turned to the detective, saying:

“You can hear what I have to say to father, sir. Come down into the dining room. Terry, you stand here at the head of the stairs and don't allow anyone else to come down.”

A few moments after, and the devoted girl was facing her father and Pete Clayton, and there was a peculiar expression on her face, as she commenced her questions.

“You think the young man is hiding in this house, also, Mr. Clayton?”

“I suspect as much, Miss Jennie.”

“And that I am befriending and assisting him?”

“I should judge as much, from your actions to-night, Miss Jennie.”

"You are right, sir. I am befriending the persecuted young man; and I will befriend him while I live. Father, I heard every word that passed between you and him while you were in the office. I was sitting at Disher's desk."

"The thunders you were, Jennie," growled her father, as he scowled at his child. "This is a nice fix, Clayton."

"What did you hear, Miss Jennie?" inquired the detective, with a lowering brow.

"I heard father confess that he had foully wronged my cousin. I heard him declare that he would make all the amends in his power; and I feel satisfied that Ben is as innocent of the crime charged against him as I am. He asserts, sir, that you murdered his old friend, and I believe him. There!"

And Jennie's flashing eyes encountered the detective's scowling brow; while her father, shocked and stunned, cowered before her.

Pete Clayton's voice was hoarse with passion, and his hands were clutched nervously, as he strode towards the young girl, crying:

"Beware, young lady, how you insult me. Your father is in my power. One word from me, and he will be a beggar—a convict—a gallows' bird! I see that you are soft on this young villain. You cannot save him, for I have sworn to kill him or drag him back to prison. And I have made up my mind to do more than that."

As the detective uttered the last words he bent his eyes on the fearless girl, and there was an expression therein at the moment that could not be mistaken.

"What do you mean, sir?" cried the fearless Jennie, meeting the scowling detective fearlessly. "Father, I want you to deny what this wretch—this murderer—asserts. Are you in his power?"

"I am, Jennie. For mercy's sake, do not insult him again. Clayton, let Jennie alone for the present. She is a good girl, only she is so hasty."

"You tell her, then," commanded the man, "as you value your life, that I am not a murderer. You tell her that she must be my wife, or she will see you on the scaffold. I'm not going to be dared in this way."

"Your wife!" gasped Jennie.

"Yes, my wife," returned the detective. "That is the arrangement. You must marry me in the morning, or I will denounce your father and drag him to prison on a charge of murder. You are right about your cousin. He did not commit the crime that was charged against him. Your father did; and it was I who saved him from the scaffold by convicting his nephew. Now, my saucy girl, you won't put on so many airs with me."

Jennie's face was as pale as death, as she turned to her crouching father, gasping forth:

"Father, this vile wretch is lying—is he not?"

"He's telling the truth, Jennie. "Oh, my, have mercy on me! Let him crush the young fool who has raised all this trouble. What is his life to mine? Spare your father, Jennie."

The devoted girl was dumb for the moment, and the tears started to her eyes for the first time, as she looked at the self-confessed guilty man, who was the author of her being, and who had been so kind and loving to her from babyhood up.

She turned from her father to the detective, and a feeling of loathing stole over her very heart as she realized the sacrifice she was called on to make.

"Marry this vile wretch!" she thought. "Oh, it would break my heart."

And then, raising her voice, the distressed girl said:

"Father, I pity you from my heart; but I will not—I cannot—save you by committing a crime. You wretch, I would sooner be hung myself than be your wife."

And the indignant girl, with the firm resolve of acting an honest part, turned to leave the room on the instant.

Quick as thought the detective sprang forward and seized her, crying:

"What do you mean to do, mad girl? Darkmore, grab her and force her to swear that she will keep her mouth shut."

Jennie struggled with the two desperate men, as she screamed forth:

"Terry—Terry, save me! They are going to murder me. Oh, you scoundrels, I can see that you would not hesitate to do it. Terry—Terry!"

They had succeeded in forcing Jennie down on a chair, and Pete Clayton was gagging her mouth with a handkerchief, when Terry burst into the room, yelling:

"Thunder and lightning, Miss Jennie, what is the matter?"

And the next instant the young printer made a dash on the detective, struck him with a revolver, and stretched him on the floor.

"What do you mean by it, sir?" cried Terry, as he held the weapon to the fallen man's head, while he glared from his employer to Jennie. "Just say the word, Jennie, and I will kill the skunk."

Tom Darkmore cowered before Terry, while his daughter sprang from the chair, crying:

"Terry, I want you to keep the pistol at that man's head, but don't shoot him unless he attempts to follow me. Father, I am going to leave your house forever."

And Jennie turned to the door once more, when another actor appeared on the scene.

When the young girl uttered her screams of terror, and called on Terry to come to her rescue, Ben heard her cries in his hiding place.

Without hesitating a moment, the gallant young fellow dashed down the stairs, only to encounter Bob Darkmore in the hall.

Bob did not heed his sister's cries, but he did notice his convict cousin; and he was already aware, from some words dropped by his father during the night, that it was all-important to crush the young fellow.

Besides, Bob Darkmore had learned to hate his disguised cousin with all the venom of his black heart, as he had never forgotten their first encounter in the printing office yard.

The moment Ben reached the foot of the stairs, Bob sprang on him and dealt him a treacherous blow with a heavy club, sending him reeling against the stairs.

Ben was taken aback for the moment, but before his assailant could repeat the blow he was on his guard and ready for the encounter.

Dodging the second blow aimed at him, Bob closed in on his cousin, seized the club, dragged it from his grasp, and then, breaking away, he knocked the young rascal to the floor, just as the invalid mother staggered from the sitting room, to learn the cause of the uproar downstairs.

Without waiting to salute Mrs. Darkmore, Ben rushed down the stairs to the dining room, to encounter Jennie hastening from the scene of violence, and to find his old enemies kept at bay by the devoted Terry.

"Away from here," was the young girl's exclamation, as she seized Ben by the arm. "Oh, mother, I wish I were dead!"

"What is the matter, Jennie? Husband, I am astonished," cried Mrs. Darkmore, as she stared at the actors in the strange scene.

"Away—away, Ben!" whispered Jennie, still forcing Ben out into the hall. "Come, and I will fly with you. I know you are innocent. Don't, for mercy's sake, go in there. Oh, Ben—Ben, spare poor father—for my sake."

"Let me kill that skunk, Peter Clayton, Jennie," returned Ben, "and it will be all right. I may never have as good a chance again."

"No—no! You would have to kill father, too. Poor mother! Don't expose him before her. Come with me, and I will help you to crush the scoundrel. Oh, Ben, this is awful!"

Jennie forced the young fellow up the stairs, and then out the door into the street, as she continued to whisper into his ear.

"Step into the printing office—the composing room—and you will soon see me, or hear from me. We can trust Terry, for he thinks the world of me. I can never live with father again. Only think, Ben, he wanted me to marry that brutal wretch, Pete Clayton! Oh, what an awful night!"

"Marry Pete Clayton, Jennie! Let me go back at once. I feel that the time has come to dare him openly."

"No—no, I say! They are coming after you now. In over the fence, and hide in the composing room. They will not think of looking for you in there. Trust to me, Ben."

"I will trust to you, Jennie," responded Ben, as he sprang over the fence; "but if that scoundrel offers to touch you again, I'll be out at him as sure as death."

"Jennie—Jennie!" cried her father from the hall inside.

"Don't be skeered, Miss Jennie," yelled Terry, "for the fellow won't dare touch you again. I've got his shooter, and I'll lay him out if he puts on any more airs."

"You'll suffer death for this, you infernal young fool," hissed Pete Clayton, in a whisper, as he stood before Terry in the hall.

And then, raising his voice, he cried:

"Where's that young murderer gone? I tell you, young fellow, you'll get yourself in a bad scrape, if you assist him in escaping."

"Who's assisting him in escaping?" growled Terry. "I was only keeping you from raising thunder with Miss Jennie. Isn't that so, Miss Jennie? Wasn't he——"

"Terry," interrupted the young girl, as she entered the hall door from the street, "I want you to protect me from that bad man. I want you to stand guard over him here, and shoot him if he attempts to get away, while I go for the constables. Not one word, father. Mother, I know what I am doing."

"Stop her, Bob," cried Tom Darkmore, to his hopeful son. "The girl is crazy. She ought to be in a lunatic asylum."

"You just touch her, any of you," cried Terry, "and I'll lay you out. Go ahead; Miss Jennie, and see if I don't stand to you."

Jennie ran upstairs, seized her hat and cloak, a few valuables and some money; and then she left her father's house, despite the urgent entreaties of her invalid mother.

CHAPTER XI.

ON TO THE GREAT CITY.

Terry held the detective a prisoner in the hall for more than an hour; and he would not allow his boss or his son to start in pursuit of Jennie, though the editor swore and stormed like a madman.

An hour passed, and there was no word or sign from the young girl; and even the faithful Terry began to realize that he was aiding her in assisting the young convict's escape.

Tom Darkmore was, in the meantime, in a state of terror, fearing his daughter would return to denounce him, accompanied by the officers of the village.

An hour and a half passed, and then a telegraph messenger

entered the house, bearing a dispatch for the trembling man.

It was short and explicit, reading as follows:

"Father.—I am off to New York City with my cousin. Don't attempt to follow us. Kind love to mother. Jennie."

"See now what you have done," cried the excited father, as he handed the telegram to Terry; "cure you for a darned fool!"

"I am a darned fool," cried Terry, flinging down the paper and making for the door; "but dang my eyes if she fools me again. I'm going right to New York after them."

"Go to thunder, and never let me see your face in my office again," yelled the editor, as he danced with rage. "What will we do now, Clayton?"

"Pursue them, of course. Let me get after that young fellow."

And the detective ran after Terry, who was hastening to his boarding house, with the purpose of taking the next train for the great city.

"See here, young fellow," said Pete Clayton, as he laid his hand on Terry's shoulder; "I want a few words with you."

"Hands off," said Terry, in gruff tones; "I ain't to be fooled with now."

"I don't want to fool with you. I want to set myself right, and help you get satisfaction for being fooled."

"And you bet I'll get it," said Terry. "I'm just going to lay out the snoozer what stole Jennie, and no mistake."

"You love Jennie, then?"

"That ain't any of your business, you big fraud. 'Twas you drove her away, with your blamed mystery and——"

"Stop just there, young man," interrupted Pete Clayton, in half-stern, half-familiar tones; "and now just listen to me."

"What is it, then?"

"Are you going to follow that young fellow, your cousin, to New York, and tackle him there? If you don't lay him out in a few days, he'll force Jennie to be his wife."

"I'll kill him first," growled Terry. "I'll not let any snoozer come between me and Jennie. I know she thought a sight of me until he came along."

"Take the next train for New York, then," continued the tempter. "Get on their track in the city, and I will be with you after the election. Do you understand? Work in with me, and you'll have Jennie and all her money."

"I'll work with the old boy himself on those terms," replied Terry, as he swallowed the bait offered him.

"Then start at once. Here's money for you," continued the tempter. "Pick a row with Ben on sight. He's an escaped convict, you know, and you won't get touched for it."

"I'll kill him on sight," replied the murderous Terry, "and I'll bring Jennie back."

"Half an hour from now the train will start," continued the tempter. "Were you ever in New York City before?"

"Never! but never you fear, I'll make out there. I ain't no slouch."

And Terry did start on the next train.

The bold, cunning detective hastened back to Tom Darkmore, his mind filled with vengeful thoughts, as he kept muttering:

"I've played that young fool right. The game is in my own hands. Jennie will keep Ben from working against her father. We'll get her back; I'll lay out the other fool, and then I'll make the girl marry me. Ain't she a stunner, though?"

In the meantime, Jennie and Ben, having slipped away to the depot, were traveling along towards the great city.

Jennie's mind was full of sad thoughts, as the cars rattled along, for she was much attached to her parents; while Ben,

though exultant at having secured Jennie, regretted that he had not crushed his bitter enemies forever.

They reached New York on the following day, and Ben led his cousin to a respectable boarding house on West Broadway, telling the landlady that she was his sister, and that they were orphans, seeking their fortune in the city.

As Ben had spent six months in the metropolis working at his trade, he was not at a loss for friends and acquaintances; but he did need a trusty confidant—an experienced detective or an honest lawyer—in whom he could confide to assist him in finally baffling his enemies, and clearing his good name.

The cousins did not stir from the boarding house during the day; but at night Ben sallied out to procure a new disguise, as well as to learn the address of a good lawyer.

About the hour of nine a foppish-looking fellow, with full whiskers, eye-glasses, and a fancy cane, was lounging about the Herald office, inquiring of the compositors off for the night as to the chances of getting employment on the great morning journal.

That foppish customer was our Ben in disguise; and as he had funds at command, he was soon enjoying a drink with three printers.

While thus engaged, Terry entered the saloon, called for a drink, and then cast his eyes around among the loungers.

"Aha," thought Ben, who felt safe in his disguise, "my old opponent is after me. I'll just see if he will recognize me."

And Ben, swinging his cane, and speaking in an affected tone of voice, addressed Terry, saying:

"Ha, young fellow, won't you take a drink with us, I——"

"I'll smash your head, you blamed thief," cried Terry, as he sprang on the disguised lad, and struck him in the face. "Fellers, this is a convict—a murderer—that I'm after."

"You're an infernal liar," cried Ben, as he closed with his old antagonist, and struck him in turn. "Give us a show, friends, and I'll lick the rascal."

Terry attempted to draw his revolver, but Ben, feeling assured that the jealous fellow was set on his track by Pete Clayton, did not give him a chance.

Down on the floor they rolled, fighting and struggling, while the spectators stood around them in high glee.

Terry kept calling on the bystanders to interfere, yelling:

"This fellow is a thief—a murderer! He's stolen a young girl from Centertown."

"'Tis a blamed lie! I'll punch his head, if you give us a show."

They did not get much of a show, however, for at that moment two policemen, brandishing their clubs, rushed into the saloon.

CHAPTER XII.

BEN ENCOUNTERS A POWERFUL FRIEND.

When the cops rushed into the saloon, brandishing their clubs, Ben and Terry were still hard at it on the floor.

Ben had succeeded in getting his assailant under him, and he was pounding away at his face, while Jerry kept yelling to the others to assist him, when one of the cops let fly with his club, and struck our hero on the head.

And that was a lucky blow for Ben.

"Grab the snoozers, Bill," yelled the other cop, seizing Terry as he spoke, and dragging him to his feet. "Thunders, but you've hurt that fellow."

"He's only shamming, Tom," growled the policeman who had struck Ben.

"He's not shamming, you cruel wretch," cried a manly

voice, as a stalwart form bent over the insensible young man. "You deserve to be sent up for striking——"

"Don't give me any of your slack, or I'll fetch you a clip," growled the policeman to the stalwart stranger.

"Try it on, if you dare," returned the stranger, who was a fearless-looking man of about forty years. "I've dealt with such fellows as you before. This young man is seriously cut. Send for a doctor."

"He's an escaped murderer—a convict!" yelled Terry, as the other policeman dragged him from the saloon. "I tell you I ain't done anything wrong. What are you lugging me off for?"

"That's played out. Come along with me, young fellow," cried the policeman. "Bill, you get the other fellow all right."

The policeman who struck the insensible Ben was somewhat frightened, as he stared at the bleeding head; while the stalwart stranger still bent over the wounded man, endeavoring to stop the bleeding, as he continued to denounce the brutal policeman.

"Run and summon the ambulance, you chuckled-headed fool," cried the stranger, as he washed the blood from Ben's face, where the blood was flowing down from a cut on the top of the head. "Don't you see he's badly cut?"

"You stop that sass, or I'll serve you the same way," cried the cop, raising his club. "I won't take your slack—I won't."

"Look at me for a moment," said the stranger, as he stood up and bent his keen gray eyes on the cop. "Did you ever see me before? Ha! I thought you——"

"Beg your pardon, Judge Burtis," faltered the startled cop, as he saluted the stranger. "I—I swear to Heaven, I didn't know you."

"That's all right, you know me now, and I'll know you. Just run for a surgeon, and get the ambulance."

The policeman darted out of the saloon on the instant, while Judge Burtis turned to Ben again, saying to the landlord, who had raised him to a chair:

"I can't make out why he remains insensible so long. It's only a scalp wound."

"I'm not insensible, sir, thank you," said Ben, opening his eyes and staring around. "Is that policeman gone?"

"Playing possum, eh?" queried the judge, with a merry smile.

"Yes, sir," replied Ben. "I didn't want to be arrested for fighting, and get locked up for the night. I never saw the young fellow who assaulted me before."

"Are you certain of that?" asked Judge Burtis, as he fastened his keen eyes on the escaped convict.

Ben could tell a lie with a straight face when dealing with common men; but Judge Burtis was no uncommon man, and our young hero's eye quailed beneath that piercing glance on the instant.

"I—I—may have met him, sir," Ben replied. "For mercy's sake, gentlemen, let me go before the policeman comes back."

"Come with me, then," said the judge, who realized at once that there was a mystery at the bottom of the affair. "Come with me, young man, and if you're honest and in trouble, I'll befriend you."

There was something so genial and so noble in the man's words and manner that Ben, so sadly in need of a friend as he was, placed his right hand in that of the judge's, saying:

"I'll tell the truth, sir. Do let us get away before the officer comes back."

"This way, then, young fellow," returned the judge, as he led Ben out through a side door into Ann street, just as the policeman with the ambulance drove up to the front entrance on Park Row.

The kind-hearted man took Ben's arm and hurried him

along Ann to Nassau, and then up to Printing House square, where he hailed a cab.

"You are disguised, young man," said the judge, while the cab rattled up towards Center street.

"I am, sir," was the ready response. "I have been traveling in disguise for the last two years and more. I am an escaped prisoner from the penitentiary. I was arrested and tried for murder, and I was convicted for life. I am now at your mercy. As God is my judge to-night, I am innocent of the charge."

"You will tell me all about it when we get up to the hotel, young friend. This is election night, and I did intend to remain down here to hear the returns; but I am interested in you. Confide in me, and I will be your friend—providing you are honest and true."

"You can hand me over to the police, sir—to my enemies," replied Ben, "if you doubt a word of my statement. Oh, my, but I did need a friend like you. I was afraid the whole world had turned against me."

And the hunted lad burst into tears, while his new-found friend pressed his hand and consoled him, saying:

"Cheer up, young man. The whole world has not turned against you. Did not hear your assailant mention something about a young girl who ran away with you from Centertown?"

"My Cousin Jennie, sir. She's an angel, if ever there was one. And that's the trouble. Her father is my greatest enemy."

"Don't say any more now," said the judge. "Wait until we get to my hotel."

In less than an hour afterwards, Judge Burtis had heard Ben's thrilling story, and the acute man believed every word of it.

"You have a hard battle before you yet, young man," said the judge; "but I will do all I can to help you. As I take it, you are anxious, for the girl's sake, to spare her father?"

"Yes, sir. If I come down on my uncle, Jennie will never speak to me again."

"And you think your uncle and this detective will be down here after you?"

"I am certain of it, sir. I'm sure they sent that Terry down here to lay for me, and to watch me, until after election. He's sweet on Jennie, you know."

"He seems like a determined young fellow," said the judge; "but I think I'll manage to scare him home to-morrow. In the meantime, you must adopt some other disguise, and I will go over with you to see the young lady. Do you think of marrying her right away?"

"Oh, no, sir. I'll not dream of doing anything of the kind until I clear my name—not until I am pardoned for the crime I never committed, you know."

"That's right, Ben. And you have no evidence against this Pete Clayton? You have no means of clearing yourself except by compelling him to confess to the crime?"

"There was one witness to the murder, sir, I am almost sure; but he disappeared on the morning after, and I could never get on his track."

"Who was it, Ben?"

"An old negro who lived with my guardian. You know, sir, we lived on a farm outside of Cleveland. I was in the town, selling a load of produce, during the day. When I returned at night, I found the old man dead on the floor, with his head smashed in with an ax.

"I was so horrified that I didn't know what to do; and it was some time before I recovered from the shock. Then my first thought was that old Jake had committed the crime, and had made off with Mr. Palmer's money.

"While I was standing on the floor, sobbing over the good old man who had been so kind to me, Jake crept out from under the bed, his eyes glaring as if he was crazy, and he

wringing his hands, and chattering like as if he was almost frightened to death.

"I couldn't make anything out of Jake, only that a tall man called on Mr. Palmer early in the evening, and wanted to try a young colt he had for sale. While Jake went down to the meadow to bring up the colt, the tall man remained in the house with old Mr. Palmer.

"The colt was skittish, and it took Jake a good while to catch him. When he did get back to the house with the animal, he found everything still in and around the house. He called on Mr. Palmer, and received no answer. And then, when he entered the house to look for his old master, he found him lying, as I found him, with his brains dashed out on the bedroom floor.

"Jake was so scared that I couldn't do anything with him. I saw that the old gentleman's strong trunk, where he had kept his money, was broken open, and everything was tossed around.

"Telling the old negro to remain with the dead man, I ran out of the house, jumped on the colt, and rode to the next neighbor's to give the alarm. And then I rode on to Cleveland to summon the police.

"The first man I met at the station house was Pete Clayton, who was then a detective, and he was sent back with me, and half a dozen officers accompanied him.

"I don't know how I spent that night, sir, but I'm certain I didn't sleep much. The inquest was held in the morning, and then, to my great horror, Pete Clayton accused me of killing and robbing the kind old man. I was so dumfounded that I couldn't say a word, and when the scoundrel commenced to search my pockets I made no resistance.

"And then, sir, when he drew the old man's pocketbook from the pocket of the coat I had worn to market on the previous day, with some of the murdered man's money in it, I was struck dumb altogether.

"I was in a bad fix, and no mistake, for old Jake, the negro, who was the only person who could say a word for me, was not to be found anywhere. He had disappeared during the night. I have never seen him since."

"Why did you suspect Pete Clayton, my young friend?" inquired the judge.

"Because he was bent on convicting me from the first, sir. I am certain that he put the pocketbook in my pocket during the night, for he stopped at the house. While my trial was going on, I saw him consulting with my uncle. It was only a few days before the murder that I heard from old Mr. Palmer about my mother dying in a lunatic asylum. He also told me that my uncle had all my property; and that I should claim it when I was of age. My uncle was living in Cleveland then. He moved to Centertown after I was sentenced to the penitentiary for life."

"When I escaped from prison, over two years ago, I went to the asylum where my mother died, and there I learned that it was Pete Clayton and my uncle who had put her there."

"Then you are satisfied that Clayton was the tall man the old negro saw?" inquired the judge.

"I am certain of it, sir. And I am satisfied that he either murdered old Jake, or frightened him away from Ohio.

"You would know the old fellow if you ever met him?" asked Judge Burtis.

"Certainly, sir; I could never forget him. I used to mimic the old fellow when I was a boy, and I could imitate his voice so that old Mr. Palmer used to think it was Jake himself in the dark."

"And you are good at disguises, Ben?" inquired his new friend.

"I have fooled Pete Clayton, sir."

"You must fool him again. We'll go over to the boarding

house to see the young lady. You need not tell her that I am in your secret so far as her father is concerned. Ben, my friend, we will conquer your enemies."

Ben expressed his thanks in earnest words, swearing that he would merit the judge's approval in the conflict.

They proceeded to the boarding house, where Jennie was introduced to the kindly judge, and she expressed her willingness to aid Ben in proving his innocence.

On the following morning Judge Burtis entered the court room followed by an old negro.

The old colored man was dressed in a plain suit of black clothes; his hair and whiskers were as white as his shirt front, and he wore a pair of spectacles on his nose.

"This is my man, Julius, officer," said the judge, addressing the officer of the court room. "He will wait on me hereafter; see that he is allowed to enter here whenever he likes."

"All right, judge."

The old negro took a seat in the judge's private office, where he could observe all those in the public court room.

Among the first cases called was Terry, who had been locked up all night, and who was now charged with drunkenness and disorderly conduct by the officer who had arrested him.

"Ten dollars or ten days," said the judge, as he bent his keen eyes on the prisoner.

"I swear to goodness, judge, I wasn't drunk," cried Terry. "I was only trying to arrest a murderer down from Centertown. He's a young fellow what run away with a young girl, and——"

"If I let you off will you promise me to go right back to Centertown and mind your own business?" interrupted the judge. "What authority have you to arrest anyone in the city?"

"Mr. Clayton, the detective from Ohio, sent me down here, judge," replied Terry. "He'll be down here himself to-day after him."

"I am here now," said a voice behind Terry.

And Judge Burtis turned to the speaker, in whom he recognized a noted outlaw whom he had known in California during the early gold excitement.

CHAPTER XIII.

JENNIE IN THE TOILS.

"Who are you, sir?" demanded Judge Burtis, as he scowled down from the bench at the tall detective.

"I am an officer from Ohio, your honor, in search of an escaped convict."

"Are your papers correct, sir?"

"Here they are, judge," replied Pete Clayton, as he handed up the requisite documents.

"Do you know this young man?" inquired the judge, as he pointed to the trembling Terry.

"He is a young printer from Centertown, judge, who is helping me to hunt down my man. I will pay his fine, if necessary, if he has got into a scrape."

"I had Ben safe, Mr. Clayton," said Terry, "only the officers come in on us. I was licking the life out of him."

"You were—were you?" smiled the judge. "How is that, officer?"

"I should say, judge," replied the cop who had arrested Terry, "that the fight was all the other way. The other sport was knocking spots out of this young fellow when we struck on them."

"Tain't so," cried the indignant Terry. "I can lick the snoozer every day in the week."

"I think you had better go home, young man," said the judge, in sharp tones.

The detective whispered some words to Terry, and the latter replied to the judge:

"I want to find a young lady first, judge, if you please."

"Go and find her, then; but don't go getting into a row again, or I'll have to send you up to the island."

Terry withdrew from the court room, followed by the detective; and they had not reached the street, when the old negro servant, who was no other than Ben in disguise, was on their track.

Ben followed them down Broadway to Courtlandt street, and into a hotel, where the editor of the Beagle was waiting for the detective.

Tom Darkmore was in very bad humor that morning, as everything seemed to be going against him.

His rival, Editor Franklin, of the Gazette, had defeated him in the election, and by a very handsome majority.

His daughter had fled from his home with his young enemy, and his invalid wife had insisted upon coming to New York with him, to find her loved daughter.

"Did you strike the young rascal yet, Terry?" was the first question asked by Tom Darkmore.

"I did, sir, and we had a row. But he got away from me."

"And what about Jennie? Did you see my dear girl?"

"No, sir. I didn't find her yet. But I will, Mr. Darkmore."

The three conspirators were standing in the barroom at this time, and Tom Darkmore had just called for a cocktail, when the disguised Ben passed through the saloon.

"I'm afraid my wife will die if we don't find Jennie," continued Darkmore. "She's taking on awful this morning."

"We'll find her, you bet," said the detective. "I am going now to hunt that young rascal down, and I'll shoot him on sight. Terry, you go and hang about the Herald office again, while Mr. Darkmore and I go search the boarding houses. I'll bet we'll soon strike on them."

Terry hastened away, while the two companions in crime lingered over their morning drink.

Ben lingered around the hotel until he saw his two enemies drive away, calling on the driver of the cab to go up to West Broadway as fast as possible.

It was evident that the cunning detective had been making inquiries at the ferry about the young people, as Ben saw that the driver was the very man who had conveyed them to the boarding house on the previous day.

"I must block their game somehow," thought Ben, as he looked after the cab, as it made its way through the crowded thoroughfare. "I'll take the elevated and get ahead of them."

Five minutes after, Ben arrived at the boarding house, and inquired for Miss Annie Johnson, the name assumed by Jennie in the boarding house.

"Tell de young lady as her cousin wants her," said Ben to the servant girl.

Jennie hurried downstairs at this summons, and she was surprised to find the old negro at the door.

One word in her ear was enough.

Putting on her hat and cloak, the lively girl, with a veil over her face, was following Ben up West Broadway, when the cab drove up to the door of the boarding house.

The father caught a glimpse of the familiar form as he jumped out of the cab, and the next moment he was hastening after Jennie with the elated detective.

"Jennie—Jennie," cried Darkmore, as he drew near, "you must come home with me. Your mother is dying. She's at the hotel down here."

"I'll go to see mother," returned Jennie, as she cast a look of defiance at Pete Clayton. "But I'll not go back to Centertown with you, sir."

"You must come home, Jennie."

"You forget that I am of age, father. You can never force me to marry that wicked man."

"Who is that old negro?" demanded the detective, as he noticed the disguised Ben watching them a few doors away.

"That's a colored gentleman who is taking me to a situation," replied Jennie. "I advertised in the Herald this morning, and his mistress sent him for me. Will you come with me, sir, while I go to see my mother, who has just arrived in the city? Where is it, father?"

"At a hotel in Cortlandt street, Jennie. You can go about your business, old man. My daughter will not be a servant to anyone."

"All right, massa," said Ben. "Berry sorry, fur I jus tink she'd suit missus—a bully lady."

"You please come with me, sir," said Jennie, in firm tones, "and then I'll go with you to your mistress. Father, I have made up my mind to earn my own living. Don't attempt to argue with me. Let us go and see mother."

Jennie walked back to the cab with her father and the detective, and the pretended old negro followed after.

"Get up on the seat with the driver, old man," said the detective.

"All right, massa," responded Julius.

The cab was turned around, and as they drove back to the hotel, Ben opened on the driver, saying: "Yous knows Judge Burtis, friend?"

"What! the judge at the Tombs? Guess I do, old man."

"I be his servant—him man—I be. Har's a dollar for yous, an' yu skoots ober to him when yous leabes dis load at de hotel. Just tells de judge ole Julius wants to see him at de hotel; an' I gibs you anoder dollar when you fotched him ober. Just keep your mouf shut, an' de judge much obliged."

"You bet I will, old man," replied the driver, with a knowing wink. "I think the old fellows inside are up to a game with the girl."

"Yous tells the judge about it," said the old negro. "I habs my 'spicions, too."

When they reached the hotel on Cortlandt street, the two men led Jennie up to the bedroom, where her mother was reclining on a sofa.

We will not attempt to describe the joy of the fond mother on meeting her lovely daughter; but that joy was of short duration, as Jennie announced her determination of remaining in the city.

"You must stop this fooling, Jennie!" cried her father, "and go home with your mother."

"Good-by, mother," said Jennie, as she made a movement to leave the room.

Tom Darkmore gave Pete Clayton a peculiar look, and the latter moved toward the young girl, saying:

"I am compelled to perform a disagreeable duty, Miss Jennie. You cannot leave the room. You are my prisoner, for the present."

"Your prisoner, you wretch! Dare lay a hand on me, and I will denounce you as a murderer. I dare you to— Help—help!"

"Shut up, wife," cried Tom Darkmore, as Jennie fell insensible on the floor, the detective having applied chloroform to her nostrils. "I tell you it is all for her good."

But one person on the landing heard that feeble cry for help, and the room door was burst in a moment later.

"Swar to gosh, but dar's murder going on here," cried the pretended old negro, as he made a dash at the detective. "What's yous do to the nice young gal? Hello, judge, yous just in time. See here."

And the judge was just in time, as the two villains were about to pounce on Ben.

"What's all this outrage?" demanded Judge Burtis, as he glared from Pete Clayton to Tom Darkmore, and then at the agitated invalid.

"This is my daughter, sir," said Tom Darkmore, "and I am about to take her home."

"Was it necessary to chloroform the young lady?" demanded the stern judge; "I think there's some mischief here. Julius, call a doctor."

CHAPTER XIV.

PETE CLAYTON IN A SCRAPE.

Pete Clayton stared at Judge Burtis for a moment as if he would take great pleasure in crushing the life out of him; but the fearless man paid no attention to the detective, as he lifted the insensible girl to the bed, while he continued to address the pretended old negro, saying:

"Run and summon a doctor, Julius. Call in the first officer you meet."

"Julius," cried Pete Clayton, starting at the odd-looking figure, as the disguised Ben left the room. "Did you say that old nigger's name was Julius, sir?"

"What's that to you?" returned Judge Burtis, in abrupt tones. And then, turning to Mrs. Darkmore, he inquired:

"Is this young lady any kin to you, ma'am?"

"She is my daughter, sir."

"And I am her father, stranger," interposed Tom Darkmore. "I guess we can take care of our girl without troubling you."

"Nice care you have been taking of her, sir," said the judge, in stern tones. "Dosing her with chloroform. Young lady, do you recognize me?"

Jennie opened her eyes at that moment, and stared around the room until they rested on Pete Clayton.

"Save me from that horrid wretch, sir," she murmured, reaching out her hand to the judge on the instant. "I know he means to murder me. Where's——"

"You were going to ask for my colored man, old Julius, young lady," interrupted Judge Burtis, casting a meaning look at Jennie. "He's just stepped out for a doctor. Are you of age, young lady?"

"I was eighteen last week, sir."

"Do you object to going home with your parents, young lady?" continued Judge Burtis.

"I prefer to remain in New York, sir, and earn my own living."

"Oh, Jennie—Jennie," cried the mother, "how can you say that?"

"You must come home with us, Jennie," said her father.

"This young lady must not do anything of the kind, sir," said Judge Burtis, as he turned to the editor of the Beagle. "She is of age, and she is mistress of her own actions."

"Father wants me to marry that man, sir," said Jennie, "and I hate him."

"And you want to marry a young convict who has escaped from prison," cried her father.

"And I will marry him the very day he proves to the world that he is innocent," cried the spirited girl. "For mercy's sake, father, don't turn your daughter against you. I would sooner be dead than be that man's wife."

"Are you strong enough to come with me, young lady?" inquired Judge Burtis, as a policeman appeared at the bedroom door.

"Yes, sir," relied Jennie, on the instant, as she advanced towards her mother. "Oh, mother, do not blame me."

"And you will leave me, Jennie?" sobbed the delicate woman.

"For a time only, mother. Good-by, and believe me I will ever love you. Father, I warn you to let Ben alone. I am ready, sir."

And Jennie reached out her hand to Judge Burtis as she walked towards the door.

"And I warn each of you, sirs," said the judge, facing the two conspirators, "that the young lady is now under my charge. I am about to take her up to my house in Westchester, and place her in my wife's care. Ah, Julius, you are back with the doctor. Dr. Shine, I am sorry to have given you unnecessary trouble. The young lady is all right now. Please look to the elder lady."

"All right, judge," said the doctor, as he moved towards Mrs. Darkmore, who had fallen back on the sofa, in an exhausted state.

In the meantime, the pretended old negro stood at the bedroom door staring at Pete Clayton through his spectacles with evident surprise.

"Swar to goodness, massa," he murmured, detaining the judge at the door, "if dis chile ain't seen that big gemman in Cleabeland. Gormighty, if it be'ent——"

"What's that you say, you old fool?" cried Pete Clayton, springing forward and seizing Ben by the throat. "You dare say a word against me and I'll kill you."

"Arrest that man, officer," cried the judge, flinging Pete Clayton aside. "Julius, I want you to make a charge of assault against him."

"Dis chile do wus dan dat, Massa Judge," cried Ben, as he glanced at Pete Clayton, who was seized by the officer. "I sware afore God he kills ole Massa Palmer out near Cleabeland. I seed him smash de ole generman wid de axe."

"You lying old villain," cried Pete Clayton, thrown off his guard by Ben's mimicry, "I'll make you swallow your words. Let me go, officer. I tell you I'm an officer from Ohio."

"You hold on to that man, officer," cried the judge. "This old colored gentleman is my servant, and I'll vouch for his veracity. Just take the prisoner to the court, and I'll investigate the charge against him."

"The thunder you will," cried Pete Clayton, as he stared at the disguised Ben. "Why, I tell you that old fellow is a fraud. He's no more what he pretends to be than I am."

"Guess dis chile knows who he am, Massa Clayton," said Ben. "Guess I is Julius Johnsin, what libed wid ole Massa Palmer in Ohio. Guess I kin tells how yous——"

"Hold on, Julius," interrupted the judge, who feared that Ben was piling it on too much without private instructions. "You can make your charge against the prisoner in court. He is now under arrest on a charge of assault."

"Blamed if I am," cried Pete Clayton, striking the policeman a violent blow on the face that sent him reeling against the bedroom door, and then making a dash for the stairs.

"After him," cried the judge, dashing down the stairs. "Catch the rascal down below there."

But Pete Clayton, fearing an exposure, and not daring to face it out, was determined on escaping from his accuser.

Ben's mimicry of the old negro's voice was so admirably performed as to leave no doubt in the detective's mind that he had encountered the Julius of other days—the foolish old man whom he had frightened from the old farmer's house on the night of the murder.

And Ben, remembering the old man's gait, as well as his voice, had assumed the shambling motion peculiar to old people.

Yet there was no shambling in his motion as he dashed down the stairs after the judge, and then into the street.

Across Greenwich street rushed Pete Clayton, with the judge, Ben, and the policeman in full pursuit, shouting aloud to stop

the fugitive, and fearing to fire on him, lest they should hit some of the people on the crowded sidewalk.

Before reaching West street, Pete Clayton turned once to observe his pursuers, and his hand was on his hip-pocket as he swore:

"Hang me if I don't drop some of them if they press me too close. Who'd have thought the cursed old darky would turn up here? Here's my best chance."

The detective darted into a hotel on the corner of the street, passed quickly out through the barroom and ascended the stairs.

Judge Burtis and the others were close after him, but ere they entered the barroom the fugitive had disappeared.

"Guard the door, officer, and take your man if he attempts to get out. I think we have him now, sure."

But they did not have him.

Half an hour's search through the hotel failed to discover their fugitive; and Judge Burtis was compelled to return with the disguised Ben to the other hotel, leaving the policeman to watch for Pete Clayton.

"I think it is just as well he got away, my young friend," said the judge to Ben. "We are not prepared to open on him."

"You saw how he trembled when I accused him, judge," returned Ben. "Are you satisfied now that he is the murderer?"

"I am, Ben. We will take your young lady friend up to my house in Westchester, and then I'll set a clever detective on his track. I feel that we will baffle them before long, and prove your innocence."

In less than half an hour Jennie was on her way to her new home with Ben and the judge, the young girl having again refused her father to accompany him back to Centertown.

And her father was a miserable man, indeed.

He saw how the detective quailed before the old negro; and he realized that without Pete Clayton's assistance, he would be no match for his young enemy.

All day long the afflicted wretch sat with his sick wife, expecting to hear from his fellow-conspirator, and fearing to go in search of him, lest he should encounter Ben.

"Where can that rascal, Terry, be all this time?" muttered the editor, as night approached. "I don't know what to do."

Steps were heard outside the door at that moment, followed by a knock.

"Is that you, Terry?" inquired Tom Darkmore, opening the door. "Where have you been all the day, you young villain?"

"Chasing up Ben Brevier, sir," replied Terry, "as Mr. Clayton told me; and I've found out where Miss Jennie is."

"Was Mr. Clayton with you?"

"He was, sir. He's waiting in a saloon around the corner to see you now."

"He is disguised, then?"

"He is, sir. You wouldn't know him at all if he didn't speak to you. Come on, sir."

Terry led the way out of the hotel, and then into Greenwich street.

Entering a saloon, they found an old gent seated at a table, and that person was the disguised detective.

"What are you going to do now, Clayton?" inquired the troubled editor, after they had interchanged some words in low tones.

"I'm going to take your daughter back to Centertown to-night," was the reply, "and Terry there is going to help me."

"What about that old nigger, Clayton?" continued Tom Darkmore. "Isn't it strange that he should turn up down here in New York. I thought you told me you sent him away out west."

"So I did. He was living in Dubuque, Iowa, the last I heard of him—curse him! We must get that old fool out of the way, Darkmore."

"And the young rascal, Ben. Have you got on his track yet?"

"No; we have not. But you can be sure we will have him before long. We must get the girl back home, and he will follow us up there after her. Then we can lay him out."

"I'm afraid Jennie will give us trouble, Clayton," said Tom Darkmore. "And that judge. How do you account for his taking such an interest in her?"

"That judge took Ben from the saloon last night, Darkmore, and he's got him hiding now. We are in trouble, if we don't act promptly. We must secure your daughter to-night, and we must get that old nigger out of the way."

"Murder him, you mean?" inquired Tom Darkmore, with a shudder.

"Ay, murder him, or he'll fetch us to the gallows. He's the only witness to that affair out near Cleveland. I am satisfied he has told Judge Burtis all about it. Ben Revier has told his story to the judge also. We must act promptly, Darkmore, or we are dead men. We are not dealing with children now."

"I wish to goodness I'd never thought of my sister's money," groaned the other.

"'Tis too late now," said the villainous detective, "you've got it, and I don't think you'd like to give it up. We must fight the battle out to the end. Ben Revier and the old darky have got to go under; and that judge——"

"You surely won't think of tackling him, Clayton? He looks like a man that would not be imposed on—a regular Tartar."

"I've laid out better men in my day," replied the disguised detective, "and I'll lay him out to-night if I strike against him. Who in thunder is this? Look!"

At that moment a forlorn-looking old darky, in tattered clothes, and bent almost double with age, entered the saloon.

With trembling steps he approached the conspirators, and lifting his old hat, he inquired:

"Will de good gemmen gib de poor old black man jus' a leetle somethin'?"

"What's your name, old man?" inquired Pete Clayton, in husky tones, as he stared at this new apparition.

"Julius Johnsin, sah. I comes from away out de west, and I'se dead broke."

"Ain't you Judge Burtis' servant?" demanded Tom Darkmore.

"'Tain't the same old nigger that we saw up in Westchester this afternoon, Mr. Clayton," said Terry, in a whisper, "though he talks and looks mighty like him."

"Were you ever in Cleveland, old man?" demanded Pete Clayton.

"Dis ole chile libed nar Cleabeland wid an old gemman named Palmer, sar," replied the old negro, as a look of terror overspread his countenance. "'Twas to find a young pussun I knowed dar what fatched me har to New York. Did youse ebber meet a young gemman named Ben Revier, 'scape from the Ohio prison?"

"What about him?" demanded the detective.

"'Cause I hearn dat he war put in prison fur killing ole Massa Palmer; an' I knowed he's innocent. When I hearn he suffers for de crime, I strikes back to Cleabeland, an' I found he escaped. Den I trabbles on har lookin' fur de poor young man, cause my ole conscience told me fur to do it."

"Come with me, old man," said the detective, "and I'll show you where he is. Remain here, friends, till I come back."

"What are you going to do with the old fellow, Clayton?" inquired Tom Darkmore, in low tones, as he drew the villain aside.

"It seems this is the real Simon Pure old Julius Johnson, and the man to-day was no other than Ben Revier in disguise. I am going to put this old fool out of the way; and then I'm going for the young dog. Come with me, old fellow."

"Youse don't say youse takes me to Ben, sar?" said the old darky, as he followed the treacherous man from the saloon. "Whar am de child?"

"Over here in Jersey. I know him well, for he is a friend of mine."

Old Julius followed the detective down Courtlandt street to the Jersey ferry, muttering his thanks the while, as he thought of the promised meeting with his young friend, Ben Revier.

That simple old negro was frightened from the house in Cleveland on the night of the murder, by Pete Clayton telling him that he was suspected of the crime.

He fled to Cincinnati, and from thence down to Cairo, never hearing about Ben's trouble.

From Cairo the old man worked his way up to Dubuque, where he was seen by Pete Clayton on the following year.

It was only two months before the time of which we write that Julius encountered an acquaintance from Cleveland, and this old acquaintance told him all about Ben's trial and conviction for murdering old Mr. Palmer.

And then the simple old fellow, without consulting anyone, made his way back to the scene of the murder, only to learn that Ben was a fugitive, and that Pete Clayton was hunting him down in the east.

Disguised as he was, Pete Clayton was not recognized by the decrepid old negro; and the treacherous villain was leading the old man across the ferry, with the purpose of flinging him into the river.

Pete Clayton had no sooner left the saloon with his intended victim than Terry turned to the editor, saying:

"See here, Mr. Darkmore, I don't think I'll have anything more to do with this business. It's getting a little too dark for me."

"What's the matter, Terry?"

"Just this is the matter, sir. I think, from what that old darky said, that Ben is not a murderer. I ain't going to buck against him any longer."

"Then you are satisfied to let him marry Jennie, Terry?"

"Blamed if I ain't, if she likes him better than me. Do you know what, sir?"

"What is it, Terry?"

"I'm just thinking that Pete Clayton is fooling me. I think he's playing his points to get Jennie for himself."

"I'd sooner see her dead first, Terry," returned Tom Darkmore; "but what am I to do? I am in the man's power."

"Let's after him, and see what he's going to do with that old nigger, and then maybe we'd have the grip on him. I'm down on him—I am."

"And I fear him, Terry. You stand by me, and I'll pay you well. Oh, Terry—Terry, I am an unfortunate man. Everything is going against me."

"I think it's best to act on the square always, sir," said Terry. "Blame my eyes, if I ain't glad now that I didn't lay out Ben, as that rip advised me."

CHAPTER XV.

SURPRISES.

Terry and his employer hastened into the street, but the detective and the old negro had already disappeared down Courtlandt street.

"I won't follow him, Terry," said the vacillating man. "You may do as you like, but I'll wait here until he comes back."

"All right, sir," replied Terry, as he turned towards the river. "I'm going to find out, if I can, what he's going to do with the old nigger."

It was after ten o'clock when Pete Clayton's tall form entered the door, and his friend saw at once he had flung aside his disguise, and that a flash of triumph gleamed in his villainous eyes.

"What have you done with the old nigger, Clayton?" asked Darkmore.

"That old nigger will never trouble me again," was the villain's reply; "and I'm going up to Westchester to capture or kill the other nigger. Ha, ha, ha! I've got Ben where I want him now, Darkmore, and see if his friend, the judge, can save him. You must come with me."

Tom Darkmore could not resist his determined companion, and less than five minutes they were on their way to Fordham in a hack. It was after midnight when the hack entered the village, driving directly to Judge Burtis' house on the main street. A thundering knock at the door aroused the inmates, who had retired to bed.

"Who's dar?" cried a voice from the upper window, as a woolly head with a black face appeared thereat in a few moments.

"Does Judge Burtis live here?" demanded Pete Clayton, in an assumed voice.

"Yes, sah," replied the disguised Ben. "But he ain't got home from de city yet."

"So much the better," thought the detective. And then, raising his voice, he cried:

"Get down and let us in. We are officers from the city on important business. The judge will be home soon."

The judge's wife, awakening from her sleep on hearing the loud voices, hastened to slip on a morning gown, and advanced to the window, saying:

"What is the matter? Whom do you wish to see at this time of night, gentlemen?"

"We wish to see Judge Burtis on important business," replied Pete Clayton. "We expected to find him here, as we learned in the city that he started for home before us."

"Admit the gentlemen, Julius," cried Mrs. Burtis. "I do expect my husband home very soon."

Ben hastened to slip on his clothes, and hurried downstairs to open the door, while Mrs. Burtis made preparations to receive her visitors.

The young man saw two men on the stoop, with their overcoat collars drawn up over their faces, and he did not recognize his enemies in the dark.

"Step in dis way, gemmen," said Ben, leading the way into the sitting room. "We spects de judge home berry soon."

"We are in no hurry for him," said Pete Clayton, in his natural voice, as he seized Ben by the shoulder and clapped a revolver to his head on the instant. "Stir a hand, Ben Revier, and I'll kill you right here. Lady, this impostor is my prisoner. Slip on the handcuffs, Mr. Darkmore. My dear lady, this impostor is a murderer."

"What is the meaning of this, sirs?" demanded Mrs. Burtis, as she entered the room. "Are you robbers? What do you want?"

"I want this fraud," replied the detective, as he tore away Ben's false hair and whiskers. "He is an escaped murderer. Ah, Miss Jennie, you are just in time. Mr. Darkmore, tell the lady that your daughter must come with us."

"Don't you do it, Jennie," cried Ben, who was so stupefied at the sudden assault that the handcuffs were on his hands ere he uttered a word.

"You shut up, or I'll put a bullet through your head," cried the detective. "You get right out into the carriage with me."

"They'll murder him," cried Jennie, as the detective dragged Ben to the door, still holding the revolver to his head.

"No, they won't, my girl," cried a manly voice, as Judge Burtis pushed into the hall, followed by three policemen in uniform. "Seize that fellow, officers. Down with your revolver, sir!"

"I am an officer from Ohio," cried Pete Clayton, as the po-

licemen advanced on him, "and this young fellow is my prisoner. He is an escaped murderer. I can show you my papers."

"I charge you with having murdered an old man in Ohio, villain," cried the judge, "and I also charge you with having attempted to murder the only witness against you this night."

"Attempted to murder!" gasped Pete Clayton, as he released his grasp on Ben.

"Yes; thank goodness you did not succeed," replied the judge. "Guard the scoundrel, and shoot him if he attempts to escape. Young man, bring in the old negro."

"Here he is, sir!" cried Terry, as he led in the real Julius.

"Thunder and lightning!" gasped the baffled detective, "what does it mean?"

"Gemmans," said the old darky, as he pointed his finger at Pete Clayton, "dat am de man what killed ole Massa Palmer. I swar to Heaben, de villain flung dis poor ole chile into de ribber dis night."

"And I saw him do it!" cried Terry, stepping forward, "and I fished the old fellow out."

"Hurrah—hurrah! I'm cleared at last!" cried Ben, as he egro. "Oh, Julius—Uncle Julius—don't you embraced the old n know me? I'm Ben."

"Swar to gosh if it ain't de chile's voice!" cried Julius, as he stared at Ben.

"Down with that revolver, you scoundrel!" yelled the judge, to Pete Clayton. "Oh, you vile wretch!"

"I'll get even with you both!" cried Clayton, as he fired two shots in quick succession, aiming at Ben and the old negro.

And then, before the policemen could seize him, he dashed out through the door, closing it after him.

Jennie uttered a cry of agony, as she saw Ben fall beneath the old negro; and then all was confusion and uproar.

"After the fiend!" yelled the judge, rushing out after the others. "There he goes on the carriage! Shoot the horses!"

The fugitive had sprang on the carriage the moment he gained the street; and the next moment he was lashing the spirited animals, sending them forward at a lightning speed.

CHAPTER XVI.

FATHER AGAINST SON.

"As I told you before, Mr. Darkmore, I forgive you, for Jennie's sake; but I never can, and I never will, let up on Pete Clayton."

"But he writes to say that he has a sworn confession of my transactions written, and that, if he should die, it is in the hands of a friend, who will publish them—place them before Judge Burtis, in fact. Do promise me not to—"

"I can't do it, Mr. Darkmore; I have sworn to kill the scoundrel, and I'll keep my word."

This conversation was taking place in a bedroom at Ben's boarding-house three weeks after the night of the shooting at Fordham by Pete Clayton.

The desperate detective escaped that night, leaving Ben and old Julius severely wounded; and though Judge Burtis had exerted all his skill and power in chasing down the murderer, Pete Clayton was still at large, defying his enemies, and levying blackmail on his old companion in crime.

Terry and Jennie watched over Ben during his confinement, the former having obtained employment on a morning paper; while Jennie, still refusing to accompany her parents back to Centertown, had waited until Ben's recovery ere thinking of going into a store on the Sixth avenue, where Judge Burtis had secured her a berth as saleswoman.

Tom Darkmore hurried back to Centertown on the day after

Pete Clayton's escape, sold out his paper and other property, and then returned to New York city with the money thus realized, with the purpose of making off for a foreign land should Ben recover and threaten exposure.

Then it was that the miserable man received a letter from Pete Clayton, calling on him for a large sum of money, and threatening him with dire vengeance if he did not succeed in prevailing on Ben to give up the chase forever.

When Tom Darkmore received this letter from Pete Clayton he was making preparations to start in the steamer for Europe, and you may be certain that the coward trembled at the threats, well knowing that the rascally detective was just the man to carry them out.

Through Jennie's influence, and after a solemn promise that he would refund the money stolen from his dead mother, Ben consented to forgive his uncle; but he would not consent to give up the fight as against Pete Clayton.

That very night Ben and Terry, who had become devoted friends, went out from the boarding-house together to search for the disguised fugitive.

Jennie's father and mother stopped at the boarding-house with their daughter, Mrs. Darkmore having decided to remain with her girl, and share her home in the future.

Young Bob Darkmore was also in New York, leading a wild life; and his father suspected that his hopeful son was in league with Pete Clayton, who was the acknowledged leader of a gang of desperate criminals.

When Tom Darkmore found that he could not prevail on Ben to give up the fight against Pete Clayton, the frightened man resolved on leaving New York, and with all the money he could command.

Half an hour after Ben and Terry sallied out in search of Pete Clayton, Darkmore stole from the boarding-house, with his pocket full of bank bills and gold, and made his way towards the Jersey ferry.

He had not proceeded far in his sneaking way, when a familiar voice hailed him, saying:

"Halloo, father; just the man I was looking for. How are you off for funds?"

"I have none for you, you scamp. Didn't I tell you never to come near me again. Clear out, or I'll have you arrested."

"Pete Clayton wants to see you, father," continued Bob, as he kept on. "He's awful mad at you for not sending him that money."

"I'll see him and you hanged first, you young loafer."

"It won't do, father. I tell you Pete Clayton knows what you are up to. I am going to stick to you until you come down with the money. I am hard up myself, and I want you to come down. If you don't, I'll raise a row, and tell Ben you're making off with all the money you promised him. I'll——"

"Curse you for a young thief," hissed the harassed man, as he struck his son a blow in the face with a slung-shot. "Take that for your trouble."

Bob Darkmore fell on the sidewalk without uttering a cry, and the father walked away without waiting to examine his injuries.

"Hold on there, Tom Darkmore," said a voice from an entry. "Don't you attempt to run, or I'll send a ball after you! Just step right in here."

Before the half-terrified man could turn to fly or call for assistance, three strapping fellows sprang out of the entry-way, and dragged him into the entry and down into the cellar.

In less than five minutes the ex-detective had robbed his victim of every dollar he was making off with.

"Remove the gag," he cried, as he shoved the money into a valise. "Now, Tom Darkmore, you won't fool with me again. You have killed one of our band, and you must die!"

"Whom have I killed?" gasped Darkmore, as he looked at

the masked figures before him. "Oh, gentlemen, spare my life, and you can keep my money."

"You have killed your own son, Tom Darkmore," replied the leader. "He was a sworn member of our band, and we will avenge him."

"Oh, mercy—mercy," groaned the wretch, as the robbers drew their knives as if about to rush on him. "Spare my life, and I will do anything you say. I will be your slave, Pete Clayton. I will give you all I can scrape up. I will join your party, and do what you ask."

"I will spare your life on one condition, Tom Darkmore," said Pete Clayton, as he drew the trembling man aside.

"What is it?" inquired Darkmore. "Oh, Clayton, you know I was always your friend."

"I must get Jennie in my power this very night, and you must help me. I mean to marry her, and I mean to entrap that young fool, Ben, through her."

"I'll do anything, Pete, only spare my life," said the abject hound.

"Your son is now lying dead, or dying, up at the corner," continued Clayton. "You go right up to the house and tell Jennie. Get her out to see Bob, and leave the rest to me. Before you go, you must take our oath."

And the mean, cowardly father, in order to save his own life, took the oath administered by the outlaws, after which he was led out of the cellar, and made his way toward home.

CHAPTER XVII.

INTO THE ROBBERS' DEN.

"Jennie—Jennie, I am a ruined man," said the vengeful man, as he entered the young girl's room, closing the door after him. "Oh, I do wish Ben was here."

"Mr. Darkmore—Mr. Darkmore," cried Terry, on the landing outside. "I want to speak to you. Something has happened to your son Bob."

"What is it, Terry?" groaned the conscious-stricken man. "He's not dead?"

"Blamed near it, sir. Someone knocked him over with a slung-shot, and they've taken him to the hospital. Ben and me saw him taken away."

"Where's Ben now, Terry?" inquired Jennie, as she saw that her father was fearfully excited.

"Gone to the hospital with Bob, but he'll be back here soon, Miss Jennie."

"Run and hurry him, Terry," said Darkmore. "Oh, Jennie, that scoundrel, Pete Clayton, has robbed me of all my money. I can't pay Ben, now, unless he helps me to get it back. Why isn't he here, when we want him so much. Where can we find Judge Burtis. I'm bound to——"

"Here's Ben, sir," cried Terry, from the hallway. "How is he, Ben—how's Bob?"

"Dead!" replied Ben, in low tones, as he entered the room. "Don't take on, Jennie. Your son is dead, sir."

"Tell me what has happened to you, sir," said Ben. "Terry, you run and summon Judge Burtis, and get him in by the back alley. Jennie, I believe Pete Clayton killed your brother."

Terry was no sooner out of the room than Tom Darkmore related how he had been assailed and dragged into the cellar, and how he had been compelled to swear allegiance to the band; but he said nothing about killing his son.

"Then you are supposed to entice Jennie out in the street, so that Pete Clayton can grab her, sir?" inquired Ben, as he turned his loving eyes on Jennie.

"I'd die first, Ben. But I have an idea, if you have the courage, of how we can get back on Pete Clayton, and get the money."

"What is your idea, sir?"

"That you dress yourself up in Jennie's clothes, and allow

yourself to get captured. I'll go with you, you know; and Terry can steal after the carriage with Judge Burtis. Then we'll know where they've taken my money to. They won't remain in the cellar, Ben. They were getting ready to move when I left. They are watching this house now. Are you man enough to face Pete Clayton in Jennie's clothes?"

"I'll try the experiment, sir," said Ben, in confident tones. "Don't be alarmed, Jennie, for I'll be all right. Just let me have some of your clothes. Ha!—Judge Burtis—we're on the track of the scoundrel again."

"How is that, Ben?" inquired Judge Burtis, as he entered the room with Terry.

Ben explained what had happened to Mr. Darkmore, and told of the plot for surprising the outlaws and getting the money.

"A dangerous experiment, Ben," said the lion-hearted judge. "But I think it worth the trial; and I will track the carriage, you may be sure. Get on your clothes."

"Let me play Mrs. Darkmore," said the fun-loving Terry.

"A good idea," responded the judge. "Get ready at once. You lead them out, sir, and tell them, when they get you into the carriage, that Mrs. Darkmore insisted upon going to see her son at the hospital. Get ready, young man, and you may be sure I'll be on hand to help you."

Five minutes after Tom Darkmore was leading two veiled figures down the street.

"A carriage, sir?" cried a voice on the corner.

"I guess we will take a carriage," returned Darkmore. "Get in, wife. Jennie, we might as well ride to the hospital."

"What did you bring the old woman for, Darkmore?" growled the driver, who was no other than Pete Clayton, in a voice intended for Darkmore's ear only.

"She insisted on seeing her son," replied the traitor, as he entered the carriage. "Drive us to the hospital."

On through the streets rattled the cab, and then up to Broadway.

"I knew they wouldn't take us to the same place," whispered Darkmore to Ben. "He has only one fellow on the seat with him."

"And I see Judge Burtis with his friends coming after us in a coach," responded Ben, as he looked behind. "We'll trap Pete Clayton this time, sure."

The cab containing the pretended ladies stopped at a dingy-looking house on Broome street, and Pete Clayton descended to open the door, saying, in a disguised voice:

"This is the hospital, sir. Ring the bell, and they will let you in."

"It will be a hospital for you, you rascal!" thought Ben. "It will be your slaughter-house to-night."

And the brave fellow followed Tom Darkmore into the entry, while Terry kept at his side.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LAST STRUGGLE OF ALL.

When the two disguised friends entered the hall of the house where the outlaws were living for the time, they were followed by Pete Clayton and Tom Darkmore; and the two latter conversed in whispers for some moments in the dark passage.

Up to this time, the late editor of the Beagle sustained his courage with the thought that Ben would kill Pete Clayton before the latter could turn on him for his treachery, and that he would recover his money from the daring robbers, while protecting his young daughter at the same time.

But now, that the final moment for desperate action was at hand, when he would have to face the wrath of the robbers, Tom Darkmore trembled in that hallway to such an ex-

tent he could scarcely reply to the whispered questions put to him by his old confederate in crime.

"What did you bring your wife for, you old fool?" inquired Pete Clayton. "How in the mischief can we get rid of her?"

"I—I—couldn't help it, Clayton," faltered Darkmore. "She would come when she heard her son was wounded—dying."

"Where's my poor son?" sobbed Terry, from under his veil. "Oh, where's my poor murdered boy?"

"We'll lead you to him presently, ma'am," responded Pete Clayton, in a hoarse, disguised voice, as he drew the treacherous Darkmore to the street door. "Confound it all; can't you make up some excuse to get her home, Darkmore?"

"I'll try, Clayton. My dear wife, poor Bob is not fit to look at—the doctor says. You had better come back to the house until morning. You know you are sick."

"I must see my poor boy—dead or alive," sobbed Terry, in a faint voice. "I won't leave till I see him, husband."

"Nor I," blubbered Ben, imitating Jennie's voice as well as possible. "Oh, my dear brother—where is he?"

Then Ben turned to Terry, saying, in a whisper:

"Look out for Mr. Darkmore, for I'm afraid he's weakening. I'd like to know how many we have to fight against."

"Mr. Darkmore says we'll only have to buck against four of them, Ben, and I think we can handle them, as we'll surprise them and fire first."

"We must engineer it so that we can grab the money, also, Terry. Listen!"

"My dear wife," said Darkmore, advancing in the hall towards the disguised friends, "the attendant here suggests that you take a little wine before seeing poor Bob—if you must see him to-night."

"I don't want any wine," returned Terry.

"Take it—take it," whispered Ben. "They mean to drug you. Make believe to drink it, and fall asleep. That will give us a chance to work awhile. Understand?"

"All right," returned the obedient Terry.

And raising his voice, he continued, addressing Darkmore: "Jennie thinks I'd better take a little wine to strengthen my nerves, husband."

"Come into this front room, then," growled Pete Clayton.

And the designing villain led them all into the front room, which was very scantily furnished with a few chairs, an old sofa, and a round table.

Pete Clayton retired to the back room through a folding door, and the disguised friends could hear the mutter of voices within a few moments later.

"I fear, Ben," whispered Darkmore, when they were left alone, "that I will meet death in this business. Pete Clayton suspects that all is not right now. He noticed that Terry's voice was peculiar."

"Have no fears, sir," returned Ben. "We've got him just where we want him. Terry, you sit in that dark corner on the sofa, and make believe to go off to sleep after you drink the wine. Don't lift your veil more than you can help."

At that moment, Pete Clayton returned to the dimly-lighted room, bearing a glass in his hand, and saying:

"Let the old lady take this, and I'll bring some more for the young lady. 'Tis the best of sherry, ma'am."

"Tinctured with laudanum, you scoundrel," thought Ben. "So you would force Jennie to marry you?"

Terry took the glass from Tom Darkmore's hand, lifted the veil so as to leave his mouth clear to drink, and then sipped the dark liquid, but taking care not to swallow much of it.

Tom Darkmore stood before his pretended wife during this performance, thus shielding Terry from Pete Clayton's scrutinizing glances.

"That's good," muttered Terry. "Now, husband, I feel strong enough to see my boy."

"Will the young lady take some wine?" inquired the rascally detective.

"Thank you," muttered Ben, as he inclined his head.

"He's going to try to dose me, too," continued the daring fellow, in a whisper to his cowardly, trembling uncle. "Keep up your heart, sir, and all will end well."

"'Twill end in my death, Ben, for I feel it in my bones. He has all the money about him, for I saw it bulging his pockets."

"Then we'll pitch into him at once. Terry, you make believe to fall asleep, and jump up and open the shutter there the moment I tackle Pete Clayton. Mr. Darkmore, you try and spring out into the hallway and open the front door when the fight begins, and then call on the police. Judge Burtis is sure to be on hand."

Scarcely were those whispered instructions given, when Pete Clayton entered the room with more wine, which he handed to the pretended Jennie, saying:

"When you drink this, you can see the young fellow, miss."

"Oh, dear me," groaned Terry, as he fell back on the sofa, "I do feel so sleepy. I—I don't know what's the matter with me."

In the meantime, Ben had taken the wine glass in his gloved hand, while Pete Clayton stood in front of him.

The moment for decided action had come, and our bold Ben was prepared for it.

Lifting the glass with one hand and the veil with the other, the young fellow dashed the wine into his enemy's face, as he cried:

"That's how I block your game, Pete Clayton! Take that, you infernal scoundrel!"

And before the astonished scoundrel could realize what struck him, he was lying on the floor, with a pistol to his head, and Ben's foot on his breast.

"Utter a word, and I'll blow your brains out!" continued Ben. "Open the shutter and sing out, Terry. Mr. Darkmore, get out and open the street door."

"Give me my money, you villain," said Tom Darkmore, flinging himself on his old friend and grabbing at the roll of bills in his breast pocket.

"You'll get your money, I tell you," cried Ben, flinging his avaricious uncle aside. "Terry, guard the folding doors."

Terry, in the meantime, had flung open the shutter, and had shouted to those outside; while Pete Clayton's friends in the back room, not knowing what to make of the unexpected uproar, had not as yet attempted to appear on the scene.

"I want my money!" yelled Tom Darkmore, again attempting to spring on the prostrate man.

"Help, fellows, help!" yelled Pete Clayton, as he realized his desperate position.

"Another word, and you are a dead man!" cried Ben. "Terry, shoot the first rascal who forces that door! Confound you for a fool, Mr. Darkmore, why don't you go and open the street door? Don't you hear our friends knocking outside?"

"Ha-ha, you treacherous dog!" cried Pete Clayton, as he seized Tom Darkmore by the leg and dragged him to the floor. "I'll settle with you anyhow."

The desperate detective managed to pull his old confederate over him, and the next moment they were rolling on the floor together, Tom Darkmore calling to Ben to save him, while Pete Clayton was endeavoring to draw a knife, so as to deal him a vengeful blow.

Terry had seized the handles of the folding door, and was manfully resisting the efforts of the robbers in the back room to open them; while Ben, who saw that Pete Clayton was bent

on killing his rascally uncle, was watching a chance to shoot his old enemy.

At that moment, a manly voice was heard at the window, and then in sprang Judge Burtis, revolver in hand.

"Surrender, you scoundrels!" he cried, as he made a rush on the strugglers on the floor.

"Oh, he's murdered me!" gasped Tom Darkmore, as he sank back on the floor, the blood gushing from his throat.

"And I'll murder more of you!" yelled the now infuriated Pete Clayton, making a dash at Ben. "At them, men!"

Bang—bang—bang! went the revolvers in the hands of Judge Burtis and the two young printers, as four of Pete Clayton's gang burst through the folding doors.

And down went three of Pete Clayton's friends, with bullets in their bodies; but the desperate leader escaped uninjured to the back room, followed by one of his gang.

"After them!" cried Judge Burtis. "The house is surrounded on all sides, and they cannot escape."

"Pete Clayton shan't escape, anyhow!" cried Ben, pushing in after his old enemy. "Ha! you infernal rogue, I've got you at last!"

And Pete Clayton was fairly cornered.

Standing at the door of the back room were two policemen in uniform, while at each of the two open windows were two more, and all presenting their revolvers at the surprised robbers.

"Will you surrender, robbers?" demanded Judge Burtis, as he leveled his weapon at the leader.

"Never!" cried Pete Clayton, making a dash for the folding doors.

The next instant out flashed two discharges, and then Pete Clayton fell, with an oath on his lips, never to rise again.

When Judge Burtis and the others lifted Tom Darkmore from the floor, they found that life was extinct.

And in his right hand, with a deadly grip fastened on it, was the roll of bills of which he had been robbed.

* * * * *

Our story closes with a scene in Judge Burtis' house at Fordham, on a night some thirteen months after the death of Pete Clayton.

Jennie and Ben are standing before a clergyman, who is performing the marriage ceremony; and our old friend, Terry, is the groomsman.

Standing in the background is the old negro, Julius, who had succeeded in proving Ben's innocence of the fearful crime.

Ben was pardoned by the Governor of Ohio; and he has started in the printing business, with Terry as a foreman.

Bob Darkmore was killed by the slungshot blow administered by his father; and Mrs. Darkmore soon died of a broken heart, though she never learned that her husband killed her son.

Jennie and Ben recovered the money in the robbers' hands, and it gave them a fair start in life.

THE END.

Read "THE SIGNAL SERVICE BOYS; or, FIGHTING ABOVE THE CLOUDS," by General James A. Gordon, which will be the next number (565) of "Pluck and Luck."

SPECIAL NOTICE: All back numbers of this weekly except the following are in print: 1 to 5, 7, 8, 10 to 13, 15 to 20, 22, 25, 29 to 31, 34 to 36, 38, 39, 42, 43, 48 to 51, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60, 62, 64, 68, 69, 75, 81, 84 to 86, 89, 93, 94, 100, 109, 116, 119, 124 to 126, 162, 163, 166, 171, 179 to 181, 212, 265. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, New York, and you will receive the copies you order, by return mail.

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THINGS OF INTEREST.

"A cork leg?" said the dealer. "Why, man, a cork leg would crumble under you like a leg of bread. You don't want a cork leg, but an elm or willow one." "I thought the best ones were cork—the lightest, you know." "No, indeed. A leg was never made of cork since the world's beginning. But many men think as you do, and I'll tell you how the fallacy originated. The inventor of the modern artificial leg—the leg instead of the stick—was John Cork. Cork's legs, cork legs, were famous around 1810. And whenever a man makes your mistake he pays an unconscious tribute to Cork's skill."

The desert of Sahara will soon be traversed by a telegraph line. All the details of the scheme have been worked out, and it is a matter of only a few months before the project will be in operation. The work is being done by the French government, which purposes to connect all its possessions in Northern Africa by wire. The poles will be of metal and will be placed 100 meters apart, supporting the wire at a distance from the ground sufficient to permit of the passage of a man on camel back. It will be necessary to maintain a guard along the line, and a regular inspection will be made every two weeks. In the meantime guards are to be held in readiness to go out on a tour of inspection in case any interruption to the service is reported. Supplies will be maintained along the line for these parties. When the line has been completed it will form a valuable link in the means of communication in the Dark Continent.

The cultivation of the sisal plant in the Bahamas has increased so much in the four years since it was introduced by Gov. Shea that it is pushing the sponge industry very hard. A correspondent predicts that the full development of the fiber plant will make a wonderful position for the little island in the commercial world. The sisal plant has always grown wild on the islands, and has been looked upon as one of the greatest pests, as it was almost impossible for the native farmers to eradicate it from the soil, its hardy bayonets appearing in the midst of every crop and refusing to be destroyed. Gov. Ambrose Shea discovered that the fiber of the leaves when stripped of the outer covering of green was the firmest and whitest of rope fibers, and, soliciting the aid of English capitalists, he at once set to work to make the sisal an important item for commerce, and now the income is nearly \$1,000,000 a year to the island of Nassua. An acre of land will produce annually half a ton of fiber, and the plants last

from twelve to fifteen years. Only the poorest and scantiest soil is necessary, and no climatic effects influence the growth of the plant in the least. All the available land in the island has been bought up by capitalists since the sisal boom, and the government has already received a fund of \$250,000 from bounties and grants, which will be used in public works on the island. The sisal industry has spread to neighboring islands, and plenty of employment is given the natives at from 50 cents to a dollar a day. They have also been allowed to buy government land in ten-acre lots at \$10 each, paying for it out of the first year's crop. In this way many of them have become independent, a ready market always existing for their products.

OUR COMIC COLUMN.

The worst thing about my visit to Kentucky this summer," said the girl who had come home, "was that the horse Cousin Hal lent me to ride always took me up to the side door of the corner saloon in the little town, and would not budge until I jumped off his back and mounted again. Not one of the men of the family would admit that they ever rode the horse."

"I once spurned a bribe of \$100,000," said the orator, naturally evoking a round of applause. "Nay, friends, do not cheer," he continued. "It is the duty of all to be honest. Besides, the services demanded by the brazen scoundrel were worth double the money."

The elderly lady who was looking through the shop of a dealer in knick-knacks picking up a small handbag. "Are you sure," she inquired, "that this is a real crocodile skin?" "Absolutely certain, madam," replied the dealer. "I shot that crocodile myself." "It looks rather soiled," observed his customer. "Naturally, madam," explained the salesman. "That is where it struck the ground when it tumbled off the tree."

Scene—Hamilton South Haugh; soldier supposed to have been wounded is brought to surgeon's tent by bearers. Bearer, reporting—Severe scalp wound, sir, accompanied with insensibility. Surgeon—Well, what have you done? Bearer—Dressed the wound, sir, and gave him a little whisky and water. Surgeon—Whisky and water! How did you expect an insensible man to swallow that? Bearer—He axed for't, sir.

Magistrate—This affair looks to me more like a common dog-fight than a case of assault and battery. You claim that this man assaulted you, and that you did not even try to defend yourself; yet he bears the marks of your teeth in three places. How do you account for that? Plaintiff—Well, it was jest like this. He hurt me so when he was a-poundin' of me that I had ter have sumthin' ter bite on or I couldn't 'a' stood it.

Once Sir Henry Irving, while playing "Macbeth" in London, was somewhat disconcerted by one of the "gallery gods." He had reached the point where Macbeth orders Banquo's ghost to leave the banquet board. "Hence, horrible shadow, unreal mockery, hence!" exclaimed Irving in his most tragic tones, and with a convulsive shudder sank to the ground, drawing his robe about his face. Just as Banquo withdrew, an agitated cockney voice from high up in the gallery piped out as if to reassure Irving: "It's all right now, 'Enery; 'e's gone!"

THE OPIUM MANIAC

By HORACE APPLETON.

"Few people outside of the medical profession have any idea of the extent of the use of opium in this country; now and then a newspaper article gives a description of the use of opium by the Chinese, and speaks of the opium habit as a vice peculiar to that country. They deplore it in the Chinese, but how much more should they deplore it, since, in its fiendish encroachments on the reason of those who use it, it is yearly placing hundreds of its victims in insane asylums in our country."

These words I found endorsed by my uncle on the back of one of his manuscripts, opening which I was deeply interested for several hours in reading his analysis of the effect of opium on the human mind. His remarks were illustrated by two cases, which I herewith present to my readers, in almost the exact words of my uncle.

Poor Dick! He was a schoolmate in the years ago, and many a jolly good time we've had together. How we used to go sledding with the girls on a moonlight winter's night, and what royal times we used to have skating on the old mill pond. Well, well—such is life!

Poor Dick! In that long ago time who would have thought that it would ever be my province to keep you under lock and key, and that I should come to write of you, to use you as an illustration of opium madness!

How Dick Nelson first came to touch opium is unknown, but as he was a sufferer from neuralgia it is supposed that he first took it to ease the pain. Finding that it succeeded, he used it again when the first symptoms of pain appeared, and at last, from using it as a cure, began to use it as a preventive.

Talk of liquor's craving! It in nowise compares with the craving for opium. Dick stopped using it, but immediately the neuralgia returned, and again he sought relief in the insidious drug, until at last—sick or well—he was compelled to take it.

Dick Nelson was not well, his friends said, but none guessed the horrible truth, for he had sense enough left to be ashamed of the habit, and therefore religiously concealed it. And for the same reason his wife and daughter kept the secret locked in their breasts.

They beseeched him to give up the use of the pernicious drug; they prayed with and for him; they begged of him; they appealed to his pride, to his manhood—but in vain. Strong in all else, he was weak as a child where opium was concerned.

I had not seen Dick in a long time, and one night I suddenly resolved to pay him a visit.

I felt his hand tremble as I held it in mine when we met. Somewhat surprised, I glanced into his face searchingly, and read his secret.

He knew that I had done so, and flushed painfully.

I hardly knew what to do. I was much pained, and felt myself in a very delicate position. Friendship for the poor fellow prompted me to speak to him, to warn him of the dangers ahead, but delicacy held me silent.

Happily he broached the subject himself, and I spoke strongly of the results which might be expected did he continue the use of opium, which I begged him to drop.

"I'll try; I'll try!" said the poor fellow. "For the sake of old times, do not mention the truth, and I will try hard to drop it, for I now know what a fiend it is which has possession of me."

Time passed on. I did not again visit Dick, for I feared he might suspect me of interfering, something which in his morbid condition of mind would in all probability only make him worse.

That he did try there is no doubt.

But the demon could not be exorcised.

This I knew when I heard that Nelson no longer went to business.

"He has worked hard and his health is failing," said a mutual friend, but he knew not what I did.

People called on the Nelsons, but Dick was never to be seen.

"He kept much to his room," said his wife and daughter, and none guessed what lay underneath the answer.

Poor Dick! Fully aroused to the horrors of the situation, he battled fiercely with the fiend which had caught him in an embrace as death-like in its character as the coils of the dreaded cobra.

There were times when he would give in with sheer weakness, and so steep himself with the drug as to lie for days in a pleasant stupor, pleasant to him, and filled with sensuous dreams; and then again he would for a brief period seem to realize the anguish he was inflicting on his wife and daughter, and then he would go nearly wild; these latter spells were invariably followed by some hours of deep moodiness, during which his red eyes would fasten themselves on his daughter with a peculiar and fearful expression.

At length the climax came.

Mrs. Nelson had long been mortally afraid of her husband, and no longer went near him. But Alice, his daughter, depending on his deep affection for her as a safeguard, did not hesitate to go near him, no matter in which mood he chanced to be.

"Oh, the disgrace—the disgrace!" he muttered one day. "I do not care for myself! Suppose I do die from the use of opium? What of it? What do I care for what the world says? But to leave Alice behind bearing the stigma that would be attached to her——"

He caught his breath and labored for a few minutes under the most intense excitement. Then he became moody and sullen, and his face became lowering, his eyebrows were knitted together.

"She shall not be left behind!"

So he breathed, intensely, but so low that it could reach no other ears but his own. And that single sentence told the grim and awful truth.

The opium had done its work! Dick Nelson was a madman!

They knew not that he had a revolver in his possession, yet he had, for all that, and withdrawing this from its place of concealment, he examined it carefully to see that it was in perfect working order.

"Ha, ha!" and he laughed, or rather chuckled, in that fiendish tone which is alone found on the lips of the mad. "Ha, ha! I hear footsteps! Alice—my darling—comes. We'll go to Heaven together."

Unsuspecting the terrible danger in store for her, Alice Nelson opened the door and glided into the room. She spoke to her father and had turned to arrange his bed, when the sharp click of the pistol lock behind her caused her to quickly turn; and her pale cheeks became paler still at sight of her father standing there, prepared to send a bullet into her brain.

It was an awful moment of suspense which followed. Had Alice acted differently from what she did, her fate would have been sealed. But she had foreseen that he might sometime go stark mad, and had schooled herself to meet that discovery.

So now she looked him calmly in the eye, and quietly asked:

"Father, do you love me as much as you used to say you did?"

"Yes," he hoarsely answered.

"Then why threaten my life?"

"Because," and his tone rang with suppressed excitement,

"because I will soon be dead, and I want you with me in Heaven."

Rapidly had her mind worked on the problem presented, and she now quite calmly said:

"Very well, father, it shall be as you wish. I have always been a dutiful daughter and will be so still; but does it not strike you that it would be nicer for us to go there together than for me to go before you and all alone?"

He seemed to ponder a minute.

"Jupiter!" he then exclaimed. "I believe you're right, Alice. But you must promise me that when I want you to die you'll do so."

"I promise," and furtively eyeing her father, she saw him put down the deadly weapon.

Poor girl! Every nerve was unstrung, but by a supreme exertion of will she managed to smooth out his bed, and then with a light word and a smile, tripped from the room, closing and then softly locking the door behind her, and for the first time making her father a prisoner.

Then she broke down completely, and staggering into her mother's sitting-room, fell upon the floor in a faint.

She was revived quickly, and flinging her arms about her mother's neck she brokenly said:

"It's all over, mother. He is mad—dangerously so! Send for the doctor."

Half an hour later the Nelson coachman hastily entered my office.

"Mrs. Nelson says you're to come at once," he said, breathlessly. "Mr. Nelson's in a very bad way, I guess."

"Go right back and tell them I'll be there as soon as possible."

I called a servant. I had had an engagement, and must tell her to have the party await my return. My horse and buggy stood before the door, and I was soon tearing away like mad toward Nelson's.

Meanwhile Dick had discovered that his door was locked, his liberty restrained.

It roused him to ferocity, and grabbing his revolver, he started across the room at full speed, and his strength and weight carried the door from its hinges.

Howling—cursing—stamping—he rushed downstairs and into the parlor, which the coachman had just entered to deliver my message.

In his fury, the madman saw in the coachman an object on which to wreak his vengeance, and seizing him by the wrist by a peculiar twist, brought him down on his knees on the carpet. In another second the deadly weapon was at the head of the frightened coachman, whose whole body was quivering with terror, whose under jaw was dropped in horror, whose face was as pallid as that of a corpse, while above him, with haggard face, and bloodshot, murderously flashing eyes, was the maniac.

Too late! Crack! A puff of smoke, a wild shriek, and the coachman was lying at full length.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the madman. "Your promise, Alice! Your promise! I now claim it!" and the murderous revolver was turned on his daughter just as I entered the house and reached the parlor door.

Horror held me spellbound for a single instant, and then I sprang forward and dashed up the maniac's arm in time to send into the ceiling the bullet intended for his child.

Happily a policeman had heard the pistol-shot, and appeared in time to help me master the madman, and he now is under my care securely caged and with a chance of recovery.

(In my uncle's diary I find a brief account of the discharge of Dick Nelson four years later, his reason restored, but his health forever shattered. They had gradually diminished the

doses of opium; they had kept him entirely without it for a year, and then discharged him. His wife and daughter took him to Europe, where he afterwards died. I also find that the coachman survived his wound, and being given a large sum by Mrs. Nelson, went into the livery business for himself, and is now running a stable in New York.)

The other case of insanity from the use of opium which I found coupled with that of Nelson, was that of a woman, and can be related in a very few words.

She was of a highly nervous temperament, writes my uncle. Rarely have I ever met with a case which so thoroughly aroused my sympathies."

The woman spoken of was also a personal acquaintance of my uncle's; young, beautiful, talented, and greatly admired.

She was a society belle, dashing, gay, brilliant, and none knew or guessed that her very existence was made a curse by the use of opium.

Henry Medhurst met and loved handsome Bertha Halsey, and, after running the gauntlet for years, to him she surrendered her affections.

"I must conquer this awful habit," she resolutely said, when he had told her of his love, when she saw in the future the prospect of becoming his wife.

And resolutely she set to work, but the task was too much for her, and with a horrible fear gnawing at her heart, she watched the approach of the wedding day.

Suppose he should find it out? She shuddered at the thought. Should she tell him the truth? It would be the true and honest plan, but—it would kill her to lose him, she loved him so deeply—and she kept the fatal knowledge to herself.

Someone guessed the truth, and hinted it to Henry Medhurst. She denied it point-blank.

"He need never know," she said to herself, afterward. "And when I am his wife I will have greater strength to battle with this curse of my life. And"—she paused and frowned darkly—"if worst comes to worst, if he reproaches me, I can end my life and so rid him of my presence."

And that very day she placed in her bosom a tiny vial containing poison; and that vial never left its hiding place from that hour to the hour in which she died.

Hers was not a case of violent insanity like that of Nelson. She was very quiet, seemed sensible, and in possession of every faculty, yet was not so, for a person who can deliberately plan self-murder and carry out that plan can never be of sound mind.

Rumors as to the truth grew more plentiful, but as she denied them, Henry Medhurst, bound by honor, could only quietly prepare for the approaching wedding day.

That day dawned at last, dawned bright and beautiful, and Bertha Halsey clad herself in the dress of a bride—a dress she was destined to wear to the grave.

Before the altar, while the minister was saying the words to make her the wife of the man she loved, she experienced that horrible inward sinking, that intense craving; her brain whirled, her sight dimmed—she must have opium or die!

She tried to slip it into her mouth undetected, but Henry Medhurst stopped her hand.

"Opium!" he said, in an accusing, stern tone. "Bertha, you have deceived me."

For one minute she rallied against the horrible weakness.

"I did deceive you, for which God forgive me. Forgive me, Henry, for I hoped to conquer the appetite. But I see I cannot. Life without you would be a blank. Good-by, forever—forever good-by!"

Ere a hand could be raised to prevent, she had swallowed the virulent poison, and in ten minutes the bride was a corpse, the wedding garments the cerements of the grave.

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